

THE FAMILY  
LIVES ITS RELIGION

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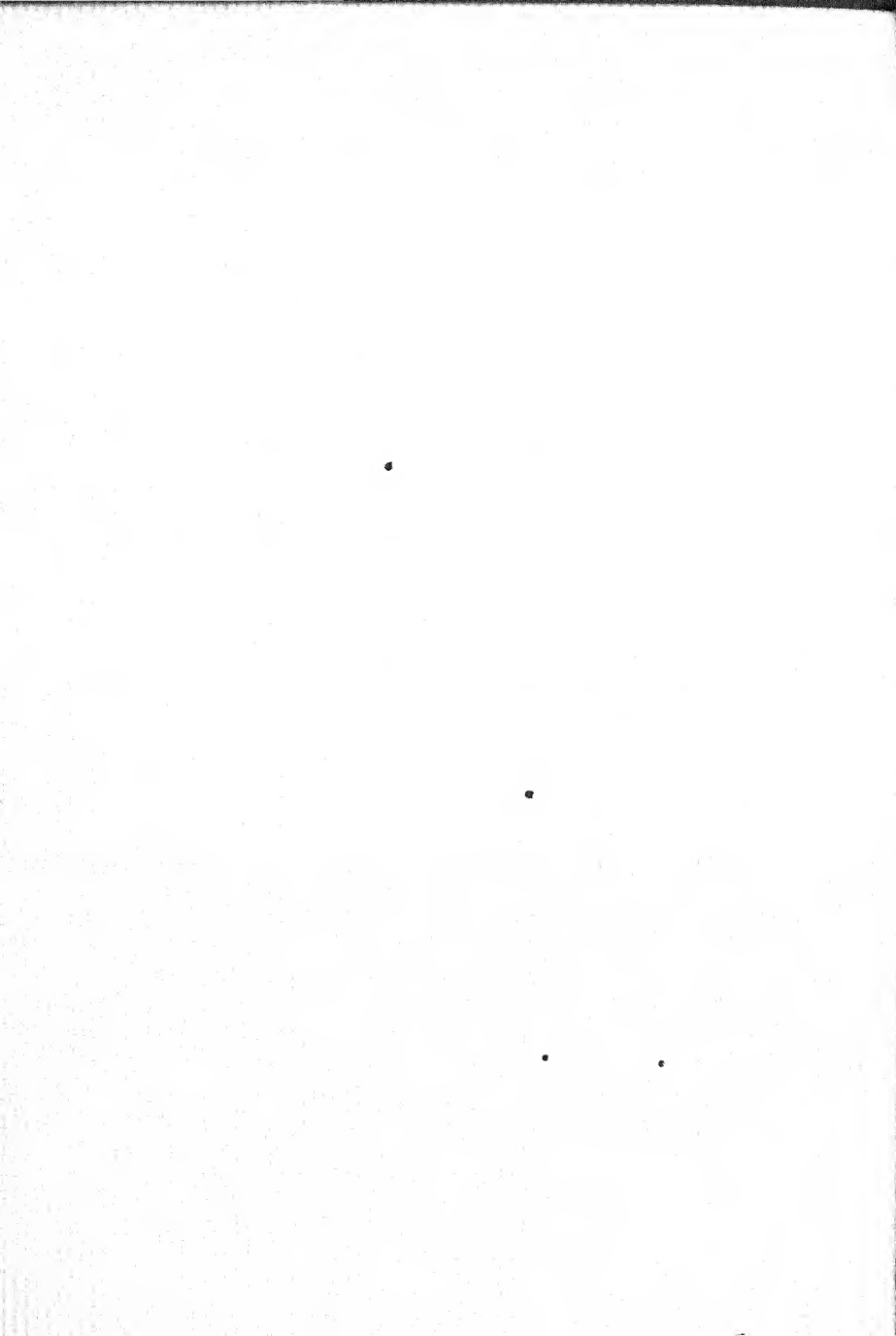
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*THE FAMILY*  
*LIVES ITS RELIGION*

Creating the Family *and* The Creative Family

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BY  
REGINA H. WESTCOTT

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THE FAMILY LIVES ITS RELIGION

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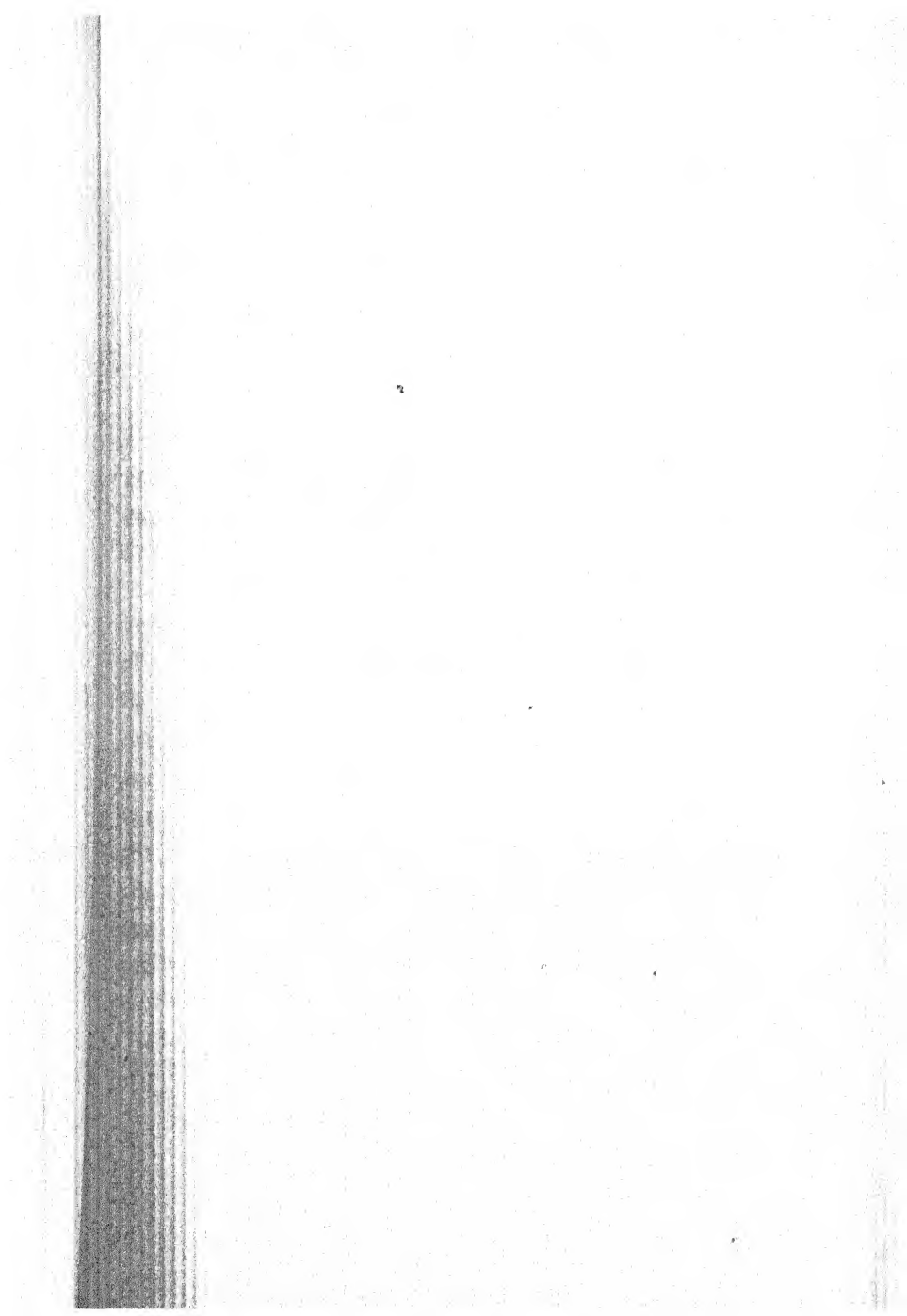
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## CONTENTS

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|  |     |
|--|-----|
| FOREWORD                                   | vii |
| PREFACE TO REVISED EDITION                 | xi  |
| PART I. CREATING THE FAMILY                |     |
| I. KNOWING RELIGION WHEN WE SEE IT         | 3   |
| II. KNOWING THE FAMILY WHEN WE SEE IT      | 25  |
| III. KNOWING THE WAY OF GOD WHEN WE SEE IT | 45  |
| PART II. THE CREATIVE FAMILY               |     |
| IV. THE MARRIAGE TRIANGLE                  | 71  |
| V. THE TRUSTEES OF THE FAMILY              | 83  |
| VI. GROWING APPRECIATION                   | 98  |
| VII. BUDGETING OUR RESOURCES               | 116 |
| VIII. BALANCING FREEDOM AND DISCIPLINE     | 132 |
| IX. FUN                                    | 147 |
| X. PROBLEM SOLVING                         | 167 |
| XI. DARK DAYS                              | 183 |
| XII. CELEBRATION AND WORSHIP               | 200 |
| RELATED REFERENCES                         | 223 |
| INDEX                                      |     |



## FOREWORD

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Modern parents are asking the questions:

What does it mean to live religiously?

What difference would an observer find in the conduct of life of a religious family as over against that of an unreligious family?

Living as we do in this hard-boiled, unneighborly, excitement-mad, materialistic age, how can we lead our children to a working understanding of God as the Creative Love which brings abundant living and world community?

Shall I send my child to Sunday school?

What does religious living cost the family?

What values does it yield?

What practical conditions and arrangements must be set up to promote effective religious living?

How does a modern family go about this?

It is harder to find satisfactory answers to these questions than for equivalent ones in the last century. Furthermore, it takes more initiative and skill for a family to live its religion today than it did years ago when the whole community more or less supported the religious way of life. But the greater investment now required brings the possibility of greater values too. The swift increase and complication in the bonds of social interdependence throughout our modern world can become for each family either snares of frustration or connections opening into richer meaning. Religious living finds the way through

this confusion of oddly assorted modes, means, and offerings of society to the best in life.

The purpose of this book is to provide practical help for present-day parents in present-day communities in the fulfilling of the religious function of family life. For reasons that later will become clear, this particular function of the family is more important than ever before in our national history, important for the family and important for society. This book is not a general treatise on child behavior and family problems, although many aspects of these are here discussed. Rather it is a study of the place and value of religion in child growth and family fulfillment. It is a cross-section view of a modern family as it lives its religion through whatever comes, day in and day out, come thick or thin.

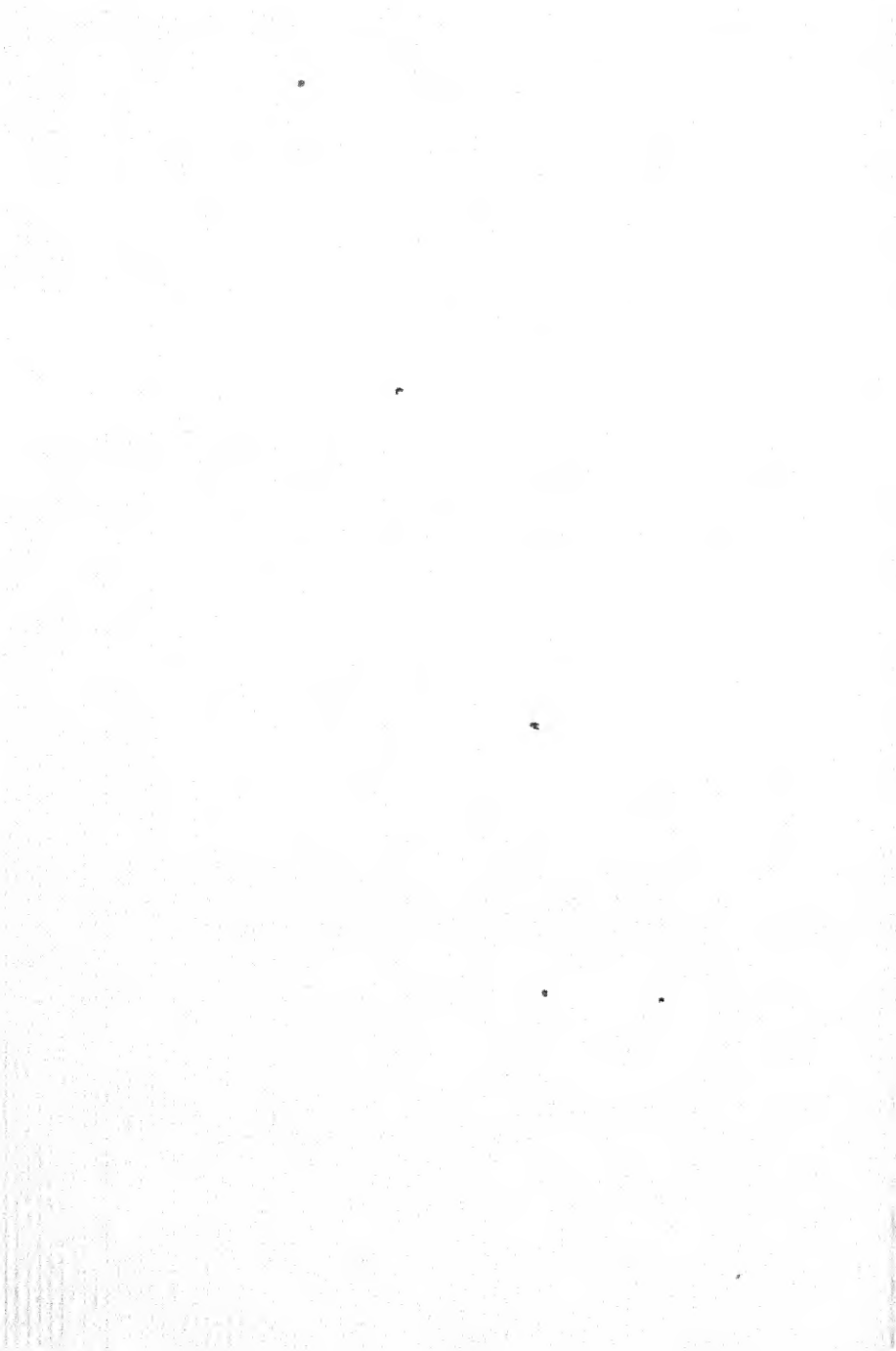
Here are the activities, questions, interests, problems, adventures, joys, difficulties, sorrows and values which crowd the days of the average modern family. Because the family lives religiously, all these aspects of family life are kept more brightly illuminated by insights, more steadily warmed by love and more vividly and meaningfully enriched by great values than would otherwise be possible. Religious living is an hour-by-hour, year-by-year undertaking, not a series of episodes. God does not come as a caller or even as an invited guest, but is ever-present and continuously creating. He is "through all, and in you all." It is this throb and thrill of life lived richly and deeply that this book seeks to catch and make accessible for the practical conduct of life.

During the writing of this book, I have felt vividly and appreciatively the presence of the many, many parents who participated in the actual family discussions, questions, problem solving, and experimentation which underlie this study.

Furthermore, this work has been markedly benefited by the thoughtful questions, criticisms, and suggestions of several classes of parents in Southern California. Manuscript in hand, they studied and tried out the principles and techniques herein presented under the remarkable leadership of Naomi Rufer, Director of Parent Education in the public school system of Santa Monica, and leader in Parent Education in Inglewood. Mrs. Rufer forwarded to me the records of these parents during this piece of field work, and included also her own invaluable judgments and suggestions. The nature of the subject of this book makes singularly fitting and enriching all this community of interest and effort entering into the writing.

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## PREFACE TO REVISED EDITION

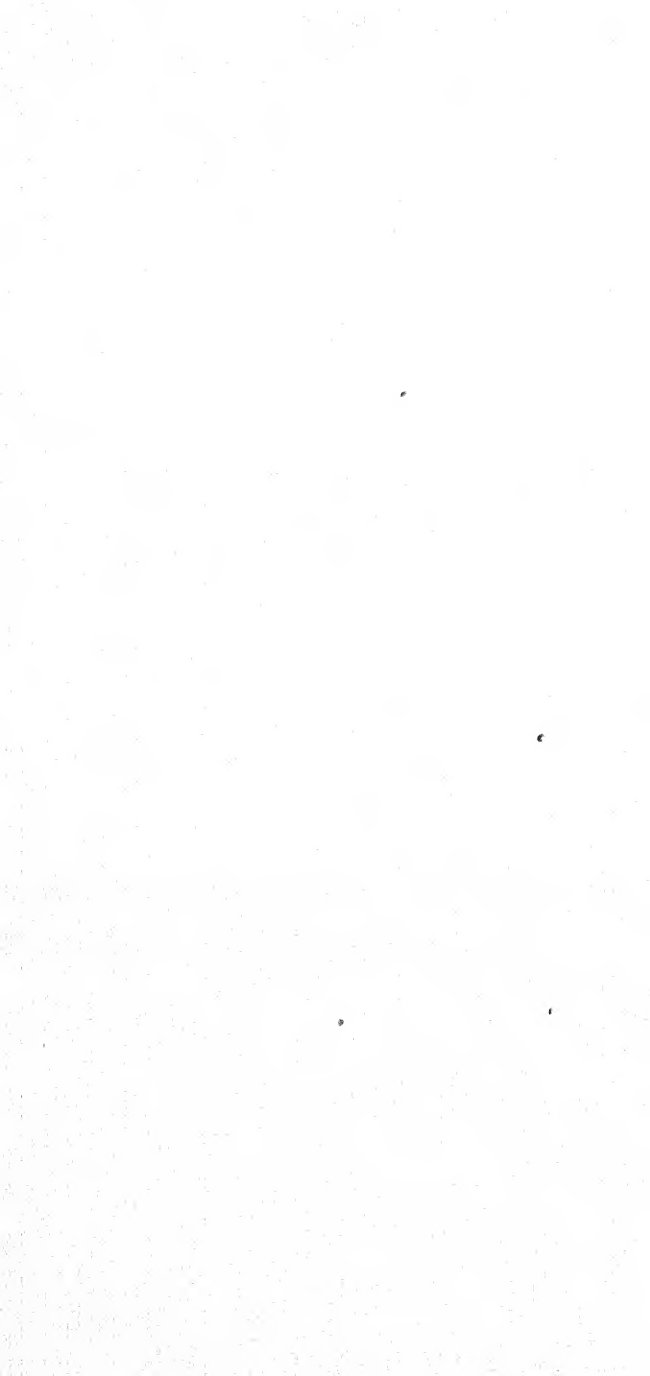
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The twelve years between the first printing of this book and the present revised edition have wrought many changes in our world, and so in the outlook and conditions of living of the family. These changes have tremendously increased the difficulties of the family in finding reliable bases for both security and richness of meaning. It is even more true today than during the first writing of this book that the way of the effective family leads into creative participation, not into the shallows of isolation or the caprices of expediency. The more creative is the participation of the family, the more completely must the family be committed to The Greatest. Consequently, the revision throughout the book has been directed toward increasing its effectiveness in fostering those conditions which create the family and which render the family more creative.

Thanks are extended to those many readers whose letters about the book have contributed to its present form.

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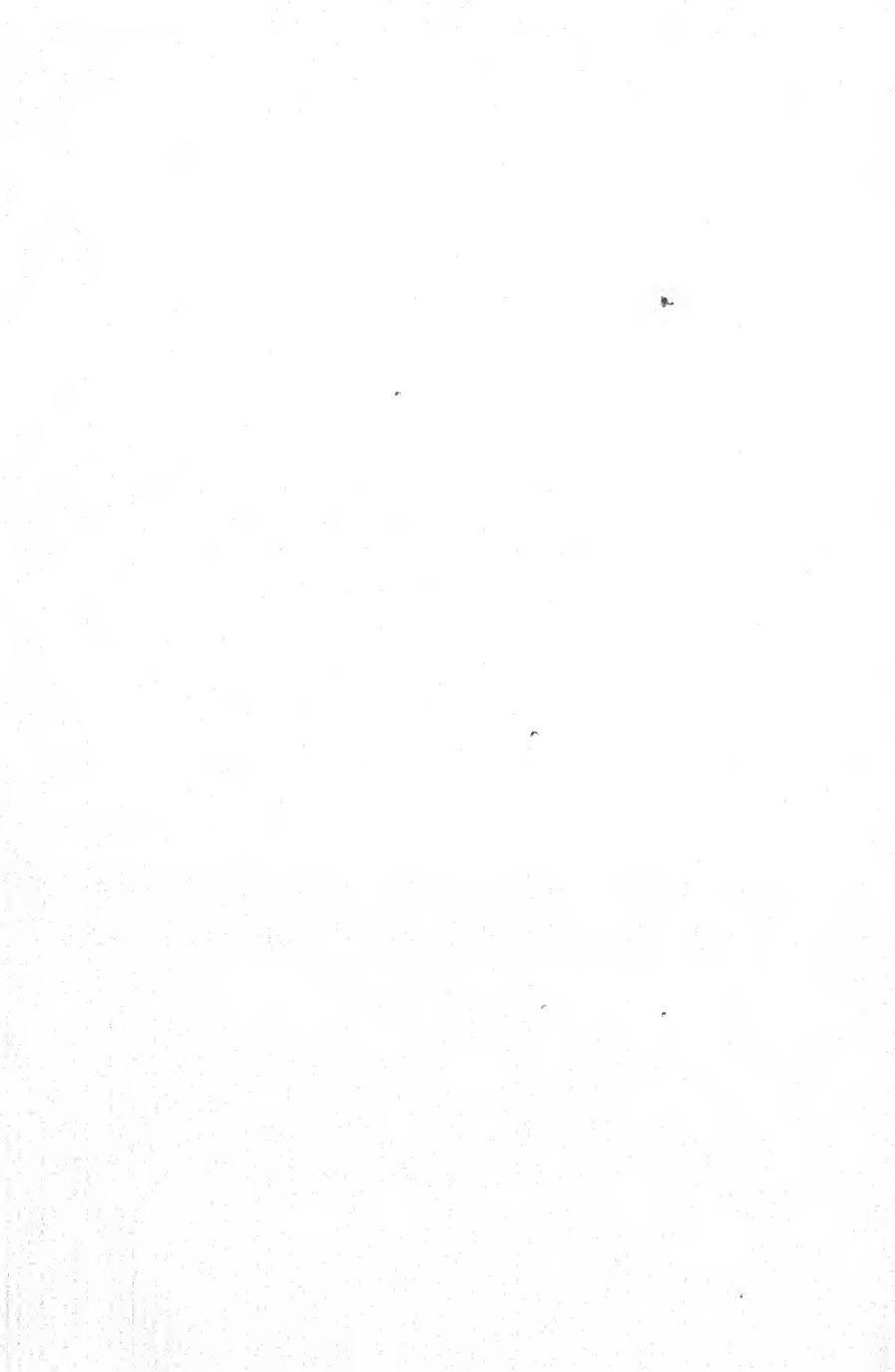


PART I  
CREATING THE FAMILY

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That we henceforth be no more children, . . .  
but speaking the truth in love,  
may grow up into him in all things,  
which is the head, even Christ:  
from whom the whole body fitly joined together  
and compacted by that which every joint supplieth,  
according to the effectual working  
in the measure of every part,  
maketh increase of the body  
unto the edifying of itself in love.

*Ephesians 4:14-16*



## Chapter I

### KNOWING RELIGION WHEN WE SEE IT

---

A bunch of eighth-grade boys were sprawling on the front porch of a neighboring house. Their voices carried so clearly that I could not help but hear what they were saying. It was near the beginning of the school year. They were trying to find a place to have a boys' party.

One of them said, "Why not have it at Chat's house? It's big enough for ten parties our size."

A frog-pond chorus of croaks and groans accompanied the answer, "Say, we went there once last year, but never again! They've got a lot of fancy furniture and stuff that they're guarding with their lives. Why, they wouldn't even let us walk across the living room."

"Well, what about Dan's house? It doesn't look too fancy and yet it's pretty good size."

"Say, your life isn't worth anything in that house. His mother is always roaring about not getting dirt on anything and ordering you to put things away before you've got them out. All she does is chase dirt. She's too fussy for anything."

"Jack's got a big lawn in back, what about his place?"

"Huh, you don't know what you're saying, Bozo. That lawn is his father's badminton court and his father's as proud of it as anything. Haven't you seen a gang of men playing there lots of times? He doesn't allow any kids around there."

They went on down the list of all the houses they could think of, bemoaning the fact that the two where they had had their best times last year were no longer available. As I followed this conversation it became obvious that these boys had a fairly accurate working knowledge of the *ruling concern* of the various families involved. Not that they had the remotest idea they had been discussing the concerns that rule American family life! Their appraisals, though clouded by the half-light of their own immediate purposes, were nevertheless pointed enough to start me pondering. What would a list of the ruling concerns of all the families in our community look like? What do we *think* we think is most worth living for? Self-deluding rationalizations aside, what actually does control our conduct of life? In short, what is our boss?

#### RULING CONCERNS

One of the most potent bosses of family life is the familiar pronoun "they." "What will *they* think?" "Oh, we just can't get away with that in this neighborhood!" "They don't do that in our crowd." "They aren't wearing that this winter."

"Keeping up with the Joneses" is the ruling concern of hordes of families in every village and metropolis in the land. In its most virulent form it even becomes "keeping ahead of the Joneses." What the members of such families wear, how they spend their vacations, the parties they give, the education they provide their children—all their living is dominated by the thought of "they." The effect is about the same whether "they" is the immediate neighborhood, church, country club, "smart set," or the "pillars of the community."

The desire to stand well among one's fellows is not without justification. Ordinarily to enable it to interact with other fam-

ilies a family must find a relationship to its neighborhood. A place in the community is worth working for, and one of the parents' functions is, in fact, building that place for their own family.

But developing some sturdy, communal basis for living in a community is not synonymous with following the pace set by one particular group. The former brings the specific interests and attitudes of one family into interaction with those of other families. It submits each social activity to this test: Does it build better relations with at least one person than would obtain without it? On the other hand, craving the acceptance of some group considered socially important entails the suppression or vitiation of the family's own best interest and points of view. It involves a slavish submission to the group in power. It substitutes a negative ruling concern, "social acceptance," for a creative ideal, "better relationships all the way through." The unforgivable crime becomes being caught doing what is "not being done" and its by-products are a wasted family budget, an irreplaceable loss of leisure time, and a traitorous betrayal of everything that makes a family creative. Achieving a place in the local sun is too small a reward, gained at too heavy a price.

This ruling concern is to be found in families of all economic levels. Each family dominated by this concern is struggling for the next rung on the social ladder without stopping to think that it will feel no different when it is reaching for a still higher rung. And, generally speaking, none of these rungs is actually higher than any other. The so-called "values" which the deluded climbers strive for are mostly empty shells and differ only in the type and expense of their outside decoration.

Since thousands upon thousands of parents are dominated by this ruling concern, it is likely that their children will be

affected also. We would expect that young people of college age, high school youth, and gradually those still younger would be well represented among those who serve this master. The facts bear out this expectation. To be popular regardless of the cost is *the* ruling concern of an enormous number of young people.

This ruling concern, social standing gained by conforming to the locally accepted pattern, is often confused with something much greater than itself—appreciative participation in group living. Once we become a member of a group, it is difficult to distinguish mere slavish herding from appreciative interaction. So busy are our lives, so many things to be done that we cannot pause for an instant. Sometimes it takes a crisis in family life, a dangerous illness or an accident, to shake us awake to the fact that most of our activities are of the squirrel-in-a-cage variety. Shock may set us to serving the truly vital concerns of life.

Group pressures, often cruel in effect, are brought to bear upon any family which does not follow the particular pattern of sophistication set by its particular community. These pressures are especially severe when exerted upon young married men. In their eagerness to make good and emulate established business men they are led into questionable business customs. The matter of drinking during business conferences is one of these disturbing practices. They feel that the welfare of their families may be at stake if they refuse to follow the lead of the older men. In some circumstances it turns out to be so. These young men must decide whether their own principles or the habits of business should rule.

Group patterns become colossally important when pressed upon a family by a group which has the power to grant or



withhold some of the things the family wants most. Public opinion can be a hard master. It is almost sure to be so where the situation is not intelligently appraised. But just as soon as we have intelligent, widely sympathetic appraisal of public opinion we no longer have mere public opinion. We have appreciative interaction. Mutually appreciative interaction is creative interaction. Just as soon as we have creative interaction, that particular pattern of living imposed by local public opinion can no longer be the *ruling* concern. It loses its power to make us robots.

There are various ruling concerns for various families. *Financial sufficiency* is a common one among rich and poor alike. It is dominant in many families so destitute that every ounce of energy and every thought *must* be devoted to money, to provide day-to-day essentials. It is dominant in many families which have sufficient income but believe that financial resources are the most important guarantee of secure and worth-while living. It is dominant in many wealthy families. These are inclined either to believe that money will buy anything or to mistake money for such actual human goods as money *can* render available if wisely spent.

Among other ruling concerns these are widespread: an interest that preoccupies the whole family, favorite foods and drink, sustaining the illusion that every member of the family "is always right," living according to some selected moral standard, being "a pillar of the church," cultivating "the family tree," seeing to it that all the family are highly educated, pleasure seeking, getting the children married off well, creature comfort, attaining fame. We cannot undertake here a discussion of each of these, although that would be enlightening. There is, however, one ruling concern which I feel must

be discussed because it is common and does much harm. This is an *ideal grown overdominant*.

#### A COMPELLING IDEAL

Being human, no person can help having ideals. It is one of our chief characteristics. The ideal, however, must be our servant; for it will become a tyrant if we give it absolute authority over our living. As soon as we regard an ideal as a coercive goal we begin to get ourselves and others into trouble.

A compulsive ideal blinds us not only to many good things right under our noses, but to greater values easily accessible. Furthermore, it makes us blind to higher *possibilities* of good.

A mother came to ask me how to prevent her small child from picking her roses. The mother's rose garden was a long-standing ideal just being realized. Therefore, in her eyes it was a sacrilege for anyone to pick a rose with a stem only two inches long. She told me how her tiny daughter had come running in, face alight with joy, to bring to her the first red bloom, picked with a stubby stem. There had followed an explosive scene. She was so blinded by her ideal that she did not sense the real beauty of her small daughter's act of joyously bringing her the loveliest thing to be found when she went out to play. This unstudied expression of love was worth a million roses.

This is not to say that we should not educate children to a better treatment of roses. But why are roses grown? Is it not to enrich human living? The child had come nearer the truth than had the mother. She had shown a greater appreciation of the flowers' loveliness and their use in bringing joy to others.

Ideals, then, *can* do no end of damage. This becomes even clearer when we investigate the start of an ideal.

Here we are in an actual situation which gives us definite dissatisfaction. We don't like the way things are or the way they go. Motivated by the desire for a more satisfying situation our imagination soars off into the future. After some play, we paint a picture of ourselves in this same type of situation, but "happy" now because it has been much improved.

The next step is the crucial one, however. We can take it in one of two ways—impulsively or creatively.

### *Impulsive Treatment*

The impulsive thing to do is to get busy making everything about us fit our dream-picture, forcing persons and things, conditions and relationships, into conformity with our ideal. We consider it good. So we feel justified, almost virtuous, in forcing others to suffer pain or inconvenience in our effort to create it. We say "It is all for their good" or "It is for the greatest good of the greatest number."

With little observation any one of us can confirm the fact that this treatment of ideals is evil and brings much evil into the world. A young husband, thrilled over Early English domestic architecture, builds a home for his family according to his dream. There it stands, very appealing in its own way until, as moderns, his family tries to live in a house that has no closets (they used chests in those old days), no bedrooms, (they slept in a balcony built over the fireplace for the sake of warmth), and no partitions except between the kitchen and the main, and only other, room.

This example is uncommon in such extreme form, but it illustrates a type of thing that happens frequently. More usual examples are everywhere in evidence. A wife goes on through the years trying to remold her husband into the kind of man

she, before her marriage, had dreamed of as her ideal. A religious person envisages the sort of man he thinks Jesus Christ was and then sets out to "be like Christ," actually meaning to be like his own image of Christ.

The trouble with any and every ideal is that it is created to rectify some felt dissatisfaction. The more keen our dissatisfaction the more dangerous the ideal is likely to be. First, it focuses attention on one narrow part of life. Second, it releases more energy behind our urge to force life into the pattern of our own ideal. Of course, it leaves out nothing of importance of which the person himself is aware at the time, but he is human and hence limited, and when he sets out impulsively to attain a fixed ideal, he is bound to neglect, warp, or exploit other aspects of life.

### *Creative Treatment*

The other method of dealing with an ideal proceeds in quite a different way. It makes good use of the ideal, to be sure, but as an illuminating lantern to light certain parts of the way, not as a map to dictate the whole way. The ideal is examined and appraised on the basis of its appropriateness, its worthiness, and its limitations.

We might put it this way. Before we take up an ideal even as a lantern in our hand we imaginatively live the life that would ensue with this ideal. We try to feel the effects it would have upon all the worth-while things of life, how it would connect us both with other great values and with the Source of all human goods. However appealing in its own right, any ideal *may* be a relatively destructive force. On the other hand, it may be generative of insight, courage, and richer participation.

A grand piano produces finer music than an upright, and so

the highest ideal of a piano *for a professional pianist* may be a grand of some certain make. But the highest ideal of a piano *for the family* may not be a grand piano. It would be a serious matter if the carrying-out of the ideal were to hinder and decrease the mutually appreciative interaction which is the very heart and life of the family. In the majority of families, the only purpose of the finer music possible in the case of the grand piano is the enrichment of the communal life of the family. But if the striving to achieve the ideal piano blocks family interaction, the ideal has done immeasurable harm.

Every specific ideal, then, must be subjected to examination in the light of that ruling concern which is worthy of our deepest devotion and which itself must not be an ideal. Ideals must be treated as tools, as instruments. They are of worth only to guide and implement our search for, and service of, that which is worthy of the devotion of all men. To use them so is to live religiously.

#### THE RULING CONCERN

This brings us face to face with the problem of the place of religion in the family. We cannot plunge into all the great problems of religion and God, but shall select only those aspects which pertain specifically to the problem of the family. Hence, whenever we speak hereafter of religion and God, let some such modifying term as this be kept constantly in mind: "Religion in this aspect . . ." "God in this aspect . . ."

*Religion*, then, is a devotion to the creative Source of all good. This devotion frees us from enslavement to any one set of created goods, whether ideal or actual. It is, therefore, that kind of self-giving wherein is loosened every bond that enslaves us to one particular good. It is that way of living wherein

no danger, no evil, no lucky break has coercive power over us. These specific goods and ills we appreciate, and we seek to attain or avoid them. However, none of them "shall be able to separate us from the love of God." We move through all these things without being moved disastrously out of line. We are affected by them without becoming subject to them. Regardless of the keenness of our appreciation of many definite human goods, our security and our lives are not rooted in them. We are not, therefore, uprooted when any one of them is destroyed. The loss of any specific good is not paralyzing or ruinous. We can do all this because we are given to God more than to the things of the world.

Furthermore, through religious devotion the personalities and the organization of the family are kept in that fluid state necessary for learning. The members are liberated from petrifying allegiances so that they can meet unexpected situations in such a way as to appropriate their offerings for the enrichment of all. Both good and evil fortunes have something to contribute. Wealth and poverty, friends and foes, even life and death may come and go, yet in so far as it is devoted to God the family is able to meet every contingency in ways that contribute to the strength and the wisdom, to the enrichment and essential security, of its members. All things add to the accumulating resources of their personalities. For the growing children this means that, by maturity, they will have attained a marvelous depth of resourcefulness which is one mark of the religious person.

It is important to note that the theoretical formulation of genuinely religious devotion has little to do with its reality. Not even an intellectual understanding is essential to the ex-

periencing of it, although understanding usually helps our devotion. What distinguishes this kind of religion is the fact that, in every situation, there is a ruling concern which keeps us from being tied down by any single fear or hate, by any one desire or specific thing we have felt to be good. The Bible expresses this clearly in two passages: "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. . . . No man can serve two masters. . . . But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

The moment we get to the place where we feel that there is some one specific thing we must have or else nothing counts, we have ceased living religiously. This is so no matter how true or good or beautiful is the thing sought, because it binds us to one small part of life. It enslaves us. "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."

Once religious, a person is always religious in the deepest sense. Once he has come to believe that God is the creative Source of all good, he cannot be permanently fooled into believing that some one "good" is worthy of his wholehearted devotion. No specific "good" becomes his "god." But the degree of his commitment to God varies from time to time for many reasons. Hence, *the control* over him of his Ruling Concern fluctuates. Distracted by numberless practical matters and enticing interests, it is not always easy to live up to the conviction that the most important thing in every situation is neither escape nor achievement, but the will of God.

## CREATIVE INTERACTION

This will of God becomes manifest to us at the human level most readily through the awakenings and conflicts arising in our interworking, interweaving relationships with our fellow men. When we with others mutually, freely and honestly express ourselves in work and play, in study and art, there ensues a quickening, revealing, challenging, inspiring interplay. This results in an increase of sensitivity and responsiveness. Then each participant can see his own interests and ways in a new light. Changes occur. The old self can never be quite the same again. It has been re-created by intercommunicating with other persons. Both the personality-organization of all the participant individuals and their operative environment have been so transformed that more quality and meaning are experienced.

For the sake of brevity, we shall here refer to all this reciprocating stimulation and responsiveness, all this mutual interpretation and transformation, as *creative interaction*. Since it is the chief means of discerning the will of God, a working understanding of it is of paramount importance. It is the main key to all that we have said about God and religion in connection with the family. It is that manifestation of God which is always going on in the family and with which its members can most readily work. More times each week than we realize, the world is made more warm, more harsh, more bright, more dark, more stark, or more beautiful through the corrective, enriching, stirring revelations of creative interaction. We call this interaction creative because, wherever it occurs, it reorganizes the situation so that there is more for each to appreciate and each person is so transformed that he can appreciate more. We



call creative interaction the work of God, the Creator, because it creates personality and the values for which personality lives.

Not all interaction is creative. First of all, then, we must distinguish creative interaction from other kinds.

If you feel the need of exercise, you can get all you require by playing handball by yourself. You bat a ball with your hand against a court laid out on a perpendicular wall. Skill is developed fairly quickly because the wall is dead, solid, unmov- ing and unchanging. You know just what this wall against which you are playing will do, and that is—nothing, it merely stands there, hard and straight. As soon as you learn this about the wall, the rest is up to you. There is no appreciative re- sponse; there is alternation between you and the wall, else there would be no game. But it is *not creative interaction*.

Even if you choose to exercise by throwing the ball at clay ducks mechanically moving across a screen and so introduce the "action" of movement, there is still alternation. Now it may be called interaction, but not of the creative kind. The situation has become more complicated because there is "action" of a sort to play against. This demands more skill on your part. Your skill develops in proportion to the degree of sensi- tivity and responsiveness in your adjustments, and so any sort of interaction does develop you. However, here again, as soon as you learn the constant nature of that against which you are playing, the rest is up to you.

The secret of the difference between interaction and creative interaction can be discovered by pressing the hidden implica- tions out of the expression "the rest is up to you." The wall and the ducks are not trying to understand you or your action or anything at all. *They have no appreciation of what is going on. Consequently, they introduce no valuations into the inter-*

action. "It's up to you" to do all the discriminating, to act on your own judgment. Only *your* valuing enters in.

"Now what do you make of all this?" Here is one common way of seeking to learn the valuing of another person on some puzzling matter. The strange thing is that he *cannot* express *all* his valuing in words. Such would be mere verbal appraisal. A *valuing* is the bearing of one's whole self toward a matter, the configuration of all one's appreciative reactions—favorable, neutral, or adverse. Therefore, behavior over a period of time reveals the valuing of a person more fully and truly than talk, especially behavior during important undertakings, such as purposive work and group action. To learn well the valuing of a person we must share with him the realities of living sufficiently to experience his interests, attitudes, and ambitions, his pet peeves, cravings, loves, hates, choices, and supreme life commitment. These are his valuing in action.

*Interaction is creative only when it occurs between the valuing of one person and the valuing of another person (or group) with such mutual appreciation, honesty, freedom and open-mindedness as to modify the valuing of each and all.* Former valuing may be strengthened by added evidence, corrected by new insights, enriched, or wholly re-created. In so far as this happens, community grows amongst all participating. This may or may not be love in the usual sense, but always it is a working understanding which yields quality and meaning for each one and weaves him into a more reinforcing and challenging web of human relationships.

Now picking up the ball again, but this time on a tennis court where you meet a player fully your equal, you are caught in interaction which *is* creative. You must deal with the valuing of another person, and he in turn with yours. In order

to anticipate where the ball will be next and what the other player will be doing next, you must interpret *his* intentions. *Each "next" response by one player is being created by all that is going on now between the two players.* Each player is a good player to the degree to which he is sensitive and responsive, not to the mere hulk or motion or force of the other player, but to his *valuings*. Each must sense, and respond to, the judgments, policies and meanings the other has and plays by. Whenever the interaction is between the *valuings* of two or more persons so that the judgments and intentions of each shape the judgments and intentions of the other (or others), you have creative interaction.

#### WHEN CREATIVE INTERACTION IS LOVE

This example of creative interaction in playing tennis, while genuine, is simple as compared with the creative interaction within the life of the family. After all, in games you may enter into the interaction or withdraw at will. Furthermore, you may put as much or as little of yourself into the situation as you choose. At least you may until you as the-person-playing-tennis have become the-playing-of-tennis itself because you have so lost yourself in the interaction that it controls you and holds you. I have seen an actress thus completely caught out of herself into her role in a great play having a great cast. In such a case, the whole troupe plays out, one against the other, the life-*valuings* of the persons they represent. For the time being they have quit their own life-*valuings* and are impersonating the habits, attitudes, interests, and ideals of the various characters. They are living in a new value-world. This is highly venturesome. It yields insights too. But even then there comes a definite time for the play to stop.

Now, in the interaction which creates the family the individual members of the group are actually being forced to keep on interacting one with another. They must share living constantly and through the whole range of interests from trifling to profound. Caught into this inevitable interaction are all their common needs, urges, appetites, helplessness, troubles, standards, ideals, aspirations and loyalties, as well as their common place of residence, tools, and possessions. Their interaction is not timed like a game or play that is called and finished. Unless blocked or deadened, it goes on all the time even when they are not in the presence of each other. Furthermore, it calls into expression all there is of them at one time or another.

We have seen that even the playing of handball requires some sensitivity and responsiveness on the part of the player. We discovered that dealing with any material, however lifeless, does force development of skillful, appreciative response on the part of the person engaging in it. But in such interaction his concern is for his own progress or profit in mastering the situation. He is not interested in the wall or the ducks except to learn enough of their characteristics to become master of them. He is under the major control of his own intentions and the minor control of those specific materials with which he is dealing.

This level of interaction is most fitting for those activities which deal with things rather than persons. However, there are today examples of human beings who rise no higher. There are individuals who interest themselves in other persons in order to influence or master or exploit them solely for their own individual gain. This is evil behavior. It may be interaction, but it certainly is not creative interaction. In fact, wherever any individual reacts with another, but not with the

valuings of this other or not in such a way as to make the valuings of both more discriminating, more vivid, and more meaningful, it is interaction but it is not creative. We have many names for individuals who typically react in this way: bullies, individualists, tyrants (whether benevolent or malevolent), snobs, and unscrupulous high-pressure salesmen.

It may be well to restate here the fact that there are some practical situations and emergencies in family and community life where interaction between persons must be carried on in ways that are not creative. Sometimes a person must be handled as a mass, a force, a shape, a motion, a thing, or a utility. We see examples of it every day: a policeman directing the movement of pedestrians and automobiles, a lifeguard bringing in an unconscious swimmer, a surgeon performing a major operation, a photographer arranging a group, a father forcibly constraining his anger-crazed child from striking another, a mother dressing her baby for a ride, or a conductor of a sight-seeing trip rounding up the loiterers whose appreciation exceeds the meter time allowed.

When persons interact creatively, each is appreciative of the unique interests, feelings, and doings of the other as well as of the contributions introduced into the group-situation. What each does shapes and modifies the personality of every other. Especially *what each member of the group actually holds to be better or worse* affects the group interaction. It is only the interaction of valuings that is creative of personality and of culture.

All this time that we have been talking about creative interaction in the family we might have been writing the word *love* in place of *creative interaction*. But this procedure would probably have completely blinded us to what creative inter-

action is. Not all creative interaction is love as we ordinarily use this term. Yet all love is creative interaction and just now we are interested in this love-form of creative interaction. Love is Creativity.

The word *love* is so old and so common that it fails to rouse us to action. Many of us regard love as a feeling or a sentiment instead of as *a real process going on all the time in genuine families*. The term *creativity* is capitalized because Creativity is God, and God is love in this sense. It is true that God is more than love, for, as we have just noted, creative interaction exceeds the bounds of love. Still, God *is* love. "He that knoweth not love knoweth not God."

Paul has given us a rather detailed account of that form of creative interaction which is love at work: "Love suffereth long, and is kind; . . . love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; . . . rejoiceth with the truth, . . . never faileth." Take note of all the *verbs* here—action, doing, interaction; sensitivity and responsiveness to the habits, ideals, judgments, and intentions of the other person instead of obsession with one's own valuings; increase in discrimination, vividness, and meaning through interacting with the interests and strivings of others felt out by sensitive alertness, tolerant effort, and responsive activity. Only when our *valuings* are interacting with the appraisals, interests, dispositions, and attitudes of other persons is love at work. Only then are we in the presence of Creativity.

An event was so deeply stamped into my memory that I can see it vividly now. It happened long before I had tried to think through in intelligent terms what religion is or had realized that creative interaction is the most important thing

in human life. As a witness of this event, I suffered some shock at the time, a shock which cold reason counseled me was disproportionate to the cause. Now, however, I think I understand more of what was intrinsically involved in the event and so find the shock fitting.

I was visiting for the day in the home of an elderly couple who had lived together in the same place a long time. Consequently I took for granted that their relationship involved mutual deep understanding and delight in each other—a matured love. Mrs. Hunt was preparing dinner. About half past eleven, Mr. Hunt came in quietly with a large box of fragrant Pippins.

I thought of all the husbands who *never* bring flowers or fruit or interesting gadgets to their wives and was touched by his appreciative thoughtfulness. Mrs. Hunt came in from the kitchen just as Mr. Hunt was setting down the box. Quickly as a cat pouncing on a rat, she started a tongue-lashing attack: "Well, this is just too much, James Hunt. Why did you have to bring home a box of apples for me to take care of when I've already more than I can do? If it weren't so far back to market, I'd tell you to take them straight back to the place where you got them."

The cutting edge of this rebuff could not fail to sever some of the bonds between wife and husband. Creative interaction between them was thereby blocked. My shock, I believe, was like the dismay all of us feel when we see something valuable being destroyed before our very eyes. Better let the apples spoil by neglect than the relationship by vilifying the loving act! Events which hinder or break it are obstructions to creative interaction. They are obstructions to love. They are obstructions to God. Religious growth means progress to the place where

nothing in any situation is so important as sustaining and promoting creative interaction. That is the good life.

#### MORAL GOODNESS AND RELIGIOUS GOODNESS

When parents set out to live "the good life," many of them find a widespread confusion about religion. There seems to be no clear distinction between living religiously and living morally. The question is often put, "If I do the best I know, what else could be expected?" An important difference lurks in this question. It forces us to distinguish between moral goodness and religious goodness.

It is true that genuinely religious living always makes us live better morally. The reverse is not always true, however. Many persons actually live high moral lives yet their living is not religious. They are under the control of specific standards of right and wrong, under certain customs, ideals, laws, and regulations, a way of life worked out by certain individuals or cultures as the particular way *they think* it is best to live. These moral codes may or may not have been developed under the shaping control of creative interaction, but their purpose is to solve the practical problems for the time and place in which they were developed. To be safe guides, they require a more or less continuous modification to meet the fluctuations of life.

Merely to modify the established code even by the utmost use of intelligence *without being ourselves subject to the transformation of creative interaction* is not sufficient, however. When we do so, our codes are no better than the wisdom of those who make them, for they overlook all that fullness of good which is opened to us when our appreciative consciousness is being transformed by creative interaction. We cannot get along without codes and guides in group living, but they



must be kept subordinate and ancillary to that will of God made progressively manifest in creative interaction.

Religious living does not deny place to moral codes and guides. It includes them but our attention is not centered mainly upon the boundaries between good and bad, between right and wrong conduct. It is centered upon God.

A young husband can refrain from extramarital relations on moral grounds, that is, established standards which indicate that such relations are not good for society, particularly the family group, and that certain harmful consequences will surely follow. Or, this young husband can refrain on religious grounds. In this case he may be fully aware of the moral standards and give them consideration. But the real control over his actions is not the moral law but that web of interconnections by which his life is bound up with the lives of his wife and children. "For the love of Christ constraineth us." He is constrained not by the law which prohibits, but by the love which fulfills.

Moral living requires that we meet our obligations. Religious living requires that we provide the conditions whereby Creativity increases the quality and meaning in all our living. When this husband reacts religiously, he senses deep within himself (even if he cannot put it into words) an interaction between his wife, children, and himself which drives out harmful infidelities. These infidelities would deaden certain areas of their living to the vitalizing and enriching work of love. He would be doing things that would have to be concealed from them. This would block free, full self-expression between them. Further, the sexual act would begin to lose its character of self-expressive love because he would be practicing it in rela-

tions where such love is impossible. The sensing of all this and being controlled by it is love, not law, at work.

We parents can "lay down the law" for ourselves, our mates, and our children and try to hold everyone to it. That is moral living. But the most precious things in the family are lost when that is all we do. In religious living, we can give ourselves, our laws, and our efforts at control, to be transformed by the Creativity of life. This Creativity always gives far more than moral laws and efforts could ever obtain. The delicate web of connections that sweeten and deepen all the ways of life will shrivel and become brittle under the rigidity of purely moralistic control. This makes it evident that religious commitment to Creativity, whether or not consciously professed, is indispensable to the well-being of the family.

#### THE GREATEST THING IN LIFE

When we understand this process of creative interaction it becomes a thrilling experience. We come to realize that we are in the presence of Creativity all the time that creative interaction is going on. There is no knowing just what may emerge from this interaction at any moment, or just what may be required of any of us at each creative change.

Our continuing and ultimate goal is to keep ourselves so committed to providing conditions for creative interaction that Creativity shall exercise supreme control over us. We want to get to the place where nothing in any situation shall be so important to us as the Creativity of God speaking to us through creative interaction. It is "the way" to more abundant life. When we recognize this way of living to be the heart of religion we have come to know religion when we see it.

## Chapter II

### KNOWING A FAMILY WHEN WE SEE IT

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It was time for Mrs. Homer to arrive. Rumor had preceded her. The whole town had been talking ever since the Homers moved in. Their entry was a bit startling even though the Depression had already brought many strange things to pass. To see the elegantly clothed Homer family emerge from their shabby cottage in the poorest section of the town stirred everyone's feeling. Some rather gloated over the Homers' come-down in being forced to leave their palatial estate and take up living in the miserable cottage which Mr. Homer had owned but never seen until he lost all his money. These gloaters felt that rich people had been responsible for the Depression and now some of them could take their own medicine.

But most of the townspeople sympathized with the Homers. For one thing, they themselves had had to give up many of the things which their families had always taken for granted as necessities. But beyond this, their respect for the Homers had grown as week after week went by and not a single complaint or play for special consideration had come from any one of them.

I was not really surprised when Mrs. Homer asked for a consultation. I thought, "She's held up as long as she can. She keeps her chin up before the public, but she now wants to come for advice and sympathy to a professional person to

whom she can pour out in confidence her suffering and difficulties."

My sympathy was not needed, however. With a delightful breeziness, Mrs. Homer asked me to work out a financial budget for the family based on their present resources. As she was describing those aspects of the family life that would furnish the necessary data, I became aware of something remarkable. A group of individuals who had borne the name *family* for eighteen years were now for the first time truly a family. They themselves were thrillingly aware of it. Mrs. Homer said, "This having to work out life together, to share everything from the umbrellas and one radio to the living room and the Ford, has brought us something we never had before. We are seeing each other as we really are inside, and we're sort of falling in love with our own family."

A little later she added, "I didn't realize until we moved into this small house how many things each of us had been keeping to himself or struggling with and suffering alone. We just didn't know much about each other's interests or dreams or troubles or wants. Now we are realizing that the only way we'll ever get what we want is through each other. It's all or none." When we came to the item *Recreation* on the budget, she said, "We need practically nothing for that, for we've really learned how to have good times together now that we can't buy entertainment any more."

What had at first looked like disaster for the Homer family had turned out to be "the luckiest break of their lives." Not that being forced to live in a shabby shack in an uncongenial neighborhood is in itself good fortune. Many families forced into such circumstances would have become seriously maladjusted or have broken up. Furthermore, the Homers could

have developed a genuine family in their previous house if they had only known what to look for, what to do. However, it would have been harder. When they were living in their large house, each member of the group had enough money, leisure, and space to enable him to live almost independent of all the other members. Each had widely different interests and attractions. Each could live by his own appraisals, interests, and strivings with little benefit of the inspiration, criticism and reshaping of these valuing of his that true group living brings. When the family went to live in the small house among strangers and without enough money to allow the members to go where they liked, they were *forced by the combination of circumstances* to learn to become *interdependent* instead of *independent*. They were forced to interact creatively one with another.

#### THE INTERACTION OF VALUINGS

This is the heart of family life, this creative interaction.

We have already stated that creative interaction is the interaction of valuing between two or more persons or groups. We need no longer shy off from this term *valuings*, for we now know that it is an easy, short way of speaking of all the interests, habits, strivings, standards, working ideals, judgments, intentions, and other aspects of our personalities that *show the ratings we give to all the various things and happenings* which make up our lives. The amount and kind of attention we give to things and the way we strive to get them or avoid them *show what we believe them to be worth* regardless of what we say. "Actions speak louder than words." In fact, when anybody "goes on what people say," without studying to find out what they really mean underneath, what they truly want, what their

intentions and goals are, we call him a simpleton or a sap. We do not have to be with people long before we begin to find out what their inner valuings are—especially when our dealings with them concern precious things, such as their children's qualities, their political views or theological beliefs, matters of money, or standards of honesty.

Like all the greatest things in life, creative interaction is hard to learn through definition alone. We come to know it convincingly only through experiences of it. Fortunately we are so made that we can learn through observing others as well as through living ourselves. Let us look in on some families at times when they are engaged in the interaction of valuings. First, we'll look at a rather simple example where the matter under discussion is familiar ground for the parent. Second, we'll observe a more complicated example of interchange of valuings where the parent encounters something he has no way of judging and so seeks the valuings of some other person to augment his own. Lastly, we'll listen to some conflict between the valuings of a whole family group.

1. Frank bursts into the kitchen, dropping his arithmetic on the table in his excitement.

"Hey, mother, what do you think Jack and I are going to do? We're going to sell Christmas cards to everybody and get a lot of money so we can buy our bicycles quicker. A guy stopped us on the way home and told us all about it and how easy it was. Why, everybody uses Christmas cards! Isn't that swell, mother?"

"I think it certainly would be grand if you could have your bicycles before spring vacation. And it is a good idea to go to work somehow so that you can get the money sooner than just by saving from your weekly sharing. After all" (there was a

twinkle in mother's eyes) "father and I discovered that work is the quickest way to things we want to buy. I think you have a fine idea."

"And lookit the cards, mother!" Frank opened his arithmetic to reveal a dozen gaudy, cheaply printed greeting folders. "We can sell them for twenty-five cents a dozen and he'll charge us only ten cents for them. Why, they'll sell fast as anything. Maybe we can get so much money that we can have a special headlight on our bicycles."

"Now wait a minute, Frank. This is a business proposition and we have to deal with it as a businessman would. For one thing, if you are going to work for your bicycles, it will pay you to find out what kind of work will bring the best results. Let's get some paper and a pencil and do some figuring."

The two sit down with their heads together. The boy's enthusiasm has not been dampened, he has felt his mother's co-operation, and he feels that he's going strong because the family is going with him. Mother is happy because she sees her son outreaching toward greater value—material good, to be sure, but it will introduce him to other goods not so material, such as work itself. All this will require him to deal sensitively and responsively with materials and with persons. She thrills over his enthusiasm especially since it is combined with a readiness to devote himself to working out his problem. He doesn't expect his parents or God to be ever-ready Providence.

First of all, the mother tells him of one or two other ways by which he could earn some money, suggesting that he think over his chances and take the best. The Browns want their lawn cared for. The grocer wants a boy to carry groceries to the automobiles of patrons on Saturdays. Then, having given him some possibilities for choice, she asks questions that will

stimulate Frank to examine critically the details of his plan for selling Christmas cards. She shows him the kind of cards she selects and asks him to compare the two sorts. Then she helps him to see the point of view of his prospective customers, their neighbors and friends, and into what a position he puts them, not wanting these cards but hating to refuse the request of the son of a neighbor or friend. She explains what businessmen mean by "good will."

In short, she helps *him* to dramatize in *his* imagination all the probabilities and possibilities in each situation. Ahead of time he lives through his possible plans *doubly*, on the basis of his own valuing and on the basis of the valuing introduced by his mother. If she has no standards, judgments, taste, or ideals about the matter at hand she cannot help him. Where she has valuing of her own, she does not impose them as orders or prohibitions. Largely through questions she leads his attention to those aspects of the situation which he has not seen or has seen through too narrow or shallow a view. By this process of creative interaction she helps him to grow toward a better choice. He is a somewhat different boy when the event is over, for some of his own wants, "ideas," and intentions have been re-created. His mother too has grown in appreciation.

2. The Thornes have recently moved into the community. Sixteen-year-old Nan is speaking. "Father, may I go to Seeley's after play rehearsal tonight? The whole crowd is going. I want to go awfully."

There are many things important enough to affect the father's answer in this situation. The relations of Nan to the other young people, her physical condition and program, the relation of late hours to activities of the next day, and the amount of energy available for fun, work, and study. Also



there may be involved such matters as clothes, finances, use of automobile, demands upon the other members of the Thorne family, and so on. Whichever of these factors are truly significant are introduced into the interaction of valuing between father and Nan. This is accomplished largely through sympathetic but stimulating questions which guide Nan either toward the better choice or toward an understanding of her father's choice, and guide her father to enlarged appreciation.

There is another factor—"Seeley's." Being practically a stranger in town, the father knows nothing about the place. He can react instantly, fearfully and forbiddingly, having gathered some disturbing reports of the sorts of places which many modern young people frequent. On the other hand, he can recognize the fact that his own valuing in this present matter are inadequate. He may say, "Let's talk it over first from the point of view of just going somewhere after rehearsal. And if that comes out the way you think you want it to, then let's run over to see that English teacher all the students think so much of and ask her what Seeley's is like."

If Mr. Thorne and the English teacher are skillful social engineers they will make Nan conscious of the *human goods* involved and *what these will do for her and require of her*. Through the creative interaction, the personality of Nan is being created. She is being guided in her choice of value in her world. Her father's valuing also are being re-shaped.

3. The Aldens are finishing dinner. Eighteen-year-old Dick turns to Mrs. Alden and asks with some indignation, "Mother, when Uncle Ben is here for dinner Friday, will you please get Donny to pipe down a bit? Last time, just because Uncle Ben had given him a real faucet to play with, he kept interrupting everything by dragging in magazines to show Uncle Ben pic-

tures of all sorts of plumbing goods. Nobody else could get a word in."

Jane intercepted her mother's answer. "And, mother, while you're piping people down, just try a little on Dick. After Donny went to bed, he didn't let Uncle Ben talk about anything except being a doctor because he's got it into his head that he's going to be one. I was just dying to ask Uncle Ben all about his trip to Miami. Besides, Elsa Gilman is forever talking about the time they went there and I want something to say on the subject myself."

Each member of the family wanted to monopolize Uncle Ben. It would take a long time to chronicle the whole episode of creative interaction by which these individualistic strivings were reshaped into something more nearly like a community of valuing. As before, largely through sympathetic but skillful questions, the members of the family are guided to reconsider their diverse interests and strivings. They are helped to think through the coming visit, first from the point of view of giving Uncle Ben the best time possible and then from that of co-operating in giving each member a fair share of Uncle Ben's attention.

It is particularly important that each member take the role of participant observer as well as participant actor. Acquiring the role of participant observer may be expressed in another way: a child must be initiated into doing things for the enjoyment-of-the-enjoyment of others. It does not "come naturally." The tendency is to "go dead" or fidget impatiently when he himself is not directly included in the interaction. He needs help to realize that, as an appreciative observer, he *can* live through the role of *every other participant* and thus multiply the values he experiences in the total situation. Of course, this

is not to say that acting is any less important than observing. A proper balance between the two must be maintained for creative interaction.

In all the illustrations thus far presented of the interaction of valuing, the parents have introduced their standards, tastes, judgments, and ideals deliberately. They have shaped the situation to emphasize certain human goods they had in mind at the time. In daily living, however, more often than not the parents and the children are all engrossed in creative interaction without one of them realizing it at the time. Father comes rushing in Saturday noon to say, "Grandfather has sent word to me that he'll take us anywhere in his car that we want to go for the afternoon so long as he can get downtown and back for a midafternoon appointment. If we can decide right away, the afternoon is ours." It's easy to imagine the assortment and conflict of proposals for the afternoon which occupy the attention of the whole family. Finally, some consensus of valuing develops out of it all.

Again, it is dinnertime and Jackie is not yet home from school. Everyone thought he was at the neighbor's house. The whole family plunges into an experience of creative interaction, this time perhaps with more agitation than reason at the start. Or the occasion which introduces the nondeliberate interaction of valuing may be the reading of a controversial article in some current journal, a special request for old clothes from some social agency, the illness of mother which requires a re-ordering of the family program, or the receiving of a substantial gift intended for the whole family. The number and kinds of occasion are legion. This *unconscious* interchange of valuing makes it all the more important, of course, that we keep our valuing as sound and sincere as is possible.

The more individuals there are in a group the more sound, attractive, and effective the personality of each *may* become, and the greater and deeper the love amongst them *may* grow. These results are sure where every member knows he can trust every other member and so dares to express freely his real self. Once expressed, the valuings of each encounter the valuings of all the others. Differences start deeper thinking and more penetrative discussion, perhaps experimentation. This brings about a progressive interweaving of valuings, that is, interaction progressively creates that particular form of human community called the family. *A true family is a community of valuings progressively created by the sharing of life, by interaction.* In it, the Creativity of Life is at work.

During genuinely creative interaction, each participant strives to: (1) understand the valuings expressed by every other participant, and *appreciate* these even where he disagrees; (2) express freely and fully his own valuings as honestly as he is able; (3) open himself, largely through worship, to such new insights as reveal his own faults and blindspots; and (4) be motivated by the sounder valuings which have issued from the group experience of creative interaction. This is the process by which relationships grow between persons and groups.

The degree of perfection in any one person or of validity in any one valuing is not our prime concern. In fact, if every valuing and every person were perfect, we would take each other and our life situations for granted. There would be no future, only a never-ending present. *The paramount factor is the interaction of valuings* issuing continuously in refreshed and deepened working understanding, love, and human community.

It is little wonder that we sometimes become radiant during interaction with others when it reaches the creative level. We

are then in the very presence of God. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I also." "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."

The nature of the valuing of parents largely determines the quality of family life. The lack of worth-while valuing impoverishes and stunts; an abundance promotes enrichment and growth. Furthermore, the *quality* of devotion of the parent to what he himself holds to be worthwhile cannot remain long hidden from his children. Sooner or later children sense when their parents are ardent, when lukewarm, when they are hypocritical, sincere, enthusiastic, or wholehearted.

So long as we keep ourselves in a learning mood, we parents can get real help in appraising our own valuing by observing other parents. The quality both of their valuing and of their devotion to values illuminates the way for us. Since we cannot put live parents into a book, we shall have to content ourselves with some brief sketches based upon case histories. These excerpts have been extracted not because of any "story interest" nor to demonstrate therapeutic techniques. Emphatically, they do not imply that the families referred to were either excellent or horrible examples. In every instance cited, a different selection of incidents from the same case study would have told a different kind of story. The particular portions here presented were selected solely for their service in helping to distinguish that real something going on in family life which creates the family and without which there is no true family.

#### CREATIVE SECURITY

The three Williams children are not model children. Their parents have to deal with enough behavior problems to assure

them that their children are bright enough to have unpredictable ideas of their own. But these children are so popular with other children that I have been intrigued to find out why. If I had to express it in one sentence, the explanation would run like this: they have been loved into daring to be themselves, into learning how to develop and express themselves, into feeling that they belong and that they can count on the family, no matter what. They are healthily selfish. They always know on which side of the bread their jam is. But they seldom feel the urge to be mean or jealous or bossy or cruel or dishonest or snobbish with other children. They do not need to compensate by cheating associates out of what they might have felt cheated out of at home. There is something about their own family life which gives them a deep sense of security and of self-worth. The interests of their associates are more than ordinarily *safe* in their presence because the Williams children sense that their own interests are deeply appreciated, shared, and reinforced in their family.

The casual observer might say that the Williamses did less for their children than many other parents. Their income is limited and Mrs. Williams "works out" part time. Their possessions have grown shabby. They have no automobile for family use. They parade no special claims to social distinction. But the parents from the start have been sensitive and responsive to each child in his own right. They appreciated each, tried to understand each, and to provide the conditions each needed as a unique personality. They cherish their children for what they really are, and not for what they might or might not become.

To be sure, Mr. and Mrs. Williams have frequently disciplined their children. They have insisted that the children

face facts squarely and honestly. Such is required in this kind of cherishing which seeks to understand and to provide the conditions of growth. But the parents have realized that growth of personality is sacred.

Man cannot make growth. It is a divine process. It is Creativity. It requires considerable devotion of the whole parent—all he has of science, art, and character—to provide the conditions for the flowering of this sacred thing called growth of personality. The parents in this family have sensed that there is Something working within the family that is greater than the family. They feel this Something creating all the time, if only the required conditions are provided.

#### CREATIVE TRUST

Children who live with a parent who "feels" or senses Creativity at work cannot possibly escape learning about It. *They* come to sense it too.

Mr. Nelson, a widower, was at a disadvantage in his efforts to provide the conditions for creative interaction. Where one parent is gone, all the rich and reinforcing interchange between husband and wife, between mother and father, is lacking. The single parent is faced with an undertaking more than twice as hard as that where both parents are living and where love is gradually growing between them. Further, since Mr. Nelson was by early training a rather undemonstrative man, his task was still more difficult. His children stood somewhat in awe of him. They did not always speak out as spontaneously as he yearned to have them do.

Talking with the Nelson children, now that they are in their early twenties, has revealed the source of their growth and trust in spite of rather severe odds. Each in his own way makes

the same statement: "I felt that father was always serving Something Tremendous in which he believed, that whatever he said or did to us, no matter how seemingly harsh, was done in the belief that he was not doing it for himself but for the sake of What-he-believed-in. I knew that he suffered when we felt bad and that he was very proud when we did anything well. He thought about us when he was away, for when he came home he always brought each of us something that he had found or made. One of the best things about it all was that he did not have to pretend to be having a good time with us. We really did have scads of fun together when he could take time off.

"He thundered at us sometimes until it shook us to the core. There was never any doubt about the meaning of his outburst because it was always worst when we didn't play square or had lied, particularly if we had lied about other people. He could not stand dishonesty. He said it broke down relations between people. His honoring of trustworthiness was impressed upon us beyond our ever forgetting.

"His gruffness was another story. He was always gruffest when he was most afraid that he would soften and grant what we asked in order to please us, when he knew that it would not be best for us.

"As we grew older, we learned the language of his ways and words. In our dealings with father we felt that we were dealing also with This Great Something to which he gave the most honored place in living. It entered into all our family doings through his part in them. So even when we felt that father was wrong about something or awfully strict, we were sure down underneath that he was being loyal to What-he-believed-in so



far as he understood it at the time. He grew along with us. I can see that now."

I could not doubt that the father had been mistaken many times and in rather extreme ways. He was so afraid that his children would not "grow up right" that he expected too much of them. Furthermore, he had had no benefit of parent education which would have helped his understanding of growth and the best conditions for it.

Each of us parents has his own unique assortment of erroneous ways. Each is bound to make uncounted mistakes in a job so complicated and significant as providing the conditions for the growth of a child. Some of our mistakes we will know about, some not. How remarkable it is, then, that this creative interaction in the family, this Creativity at work, brings about such wonderful results in spite of our misdoings, faults, and limitations, *providing we truly try to serve it and be shaped by it*. It is so remarkable as to merit our deepest reverence.

#### DISRUPTIVE CONCEIT

Discerning the effects of the absence of creative interaction is one way of learning about it. These showed in startling fashion in the school behavior of twelve-year-old Lois Richards. Her mother reported that Lois suddenly developed a fierce fit of anger about once a month during which she assaulted some one of her friends. The mother had canvassed all the causes she could think of. Their home provided extraordinarily well for the family and the children's interests. Besides, it was beautiful. The mother and daughter were on excellent terms. The family physician reported the girl in good health. A previous diagnosis of disturbance due to puberty had to be ruled out after careful investigation.

As soon as Lois began to talk freely, the instigating cause of her difficulties was revealed. She belonged to a club of girls who were unusually congenial. They had grown up together. For over a year now, this club had been having a supper once a month to which they invited their fathers. All the other fathers had come quite regularly, Lois's father never once. The fathers' suppers had turned out to be loads of fun right up to the minute the last girl in the last automobile had started home.

But Lois's father refused to go. He said, "I'll give you everything you need to do your share for the club, but I'm not going to spend one evening a month sitting around there. Your club is fun for you and my club is fun for me."

Investigation showed that all his life long the father, being handsome and wealthy and clever, had been flattered and deferred to. Although he himself did not realize it, he had developed so strong an appetite for this ego-food that he liked to go only where it was abundant and shied away from all situations which might show him at a disadvantage. Even the things he did for his family—luxurious things—he did more for self-gratification than for them. He was completely self-centered. This meant that he did not interact with the members of his family in other than the more routine ways.

The monthly suppers had shown Lois the difference between her father and the fathers of the other girls. At first she had been hurt and proud, then stubborn and blustery, now dangerously on edge and vindictive toward the other girls. The one thing above all others which she wanted of her father—himself—he would not give. Indeed, he could not give it. He belonged so completely to himself. He valued himself too highly. This is a kind of valuing that cannot be shared; nor

did it allow him to interact with Lois's valuings. He had not the faintest understanding of the social needs of his daughter.

For a time it threatened to prove an almost impossible undertaking to lead him to see that the cause of his daughter's embarrassing behavior was an impoverished father-daughter relation. Events had peculiarly emphasized for Lois the great emptiness when father is not on the job. For so long his interaction with others had been primarily selfish. He had had no conviction of the values of creative interaction. Discussion of the need of these values for his daughter's growth sounded ridiculous to him. Only these two facts, that he knew something must be done right away and that he could find no alternative course, made him willing to try a new way. But once committed, he put much talent and devotion into it.

#### STUNTING SELFISHNESS

Mr. Green takes huge delight in his large earnings because he can give so much to his children. They are decorative little persons on special occasions, but much contact shows them to be decidedly stunted personalities. This is putting it far more politely than the neighbors do. Mr. Green's own words explain the reason. "I love my children as much as any father, but I don't feel called upon to waste my time on the children's mischief, squabbings, and foolishness. All that's their mother's job. I run the business. She runs the family. There isn't anything much I don't know about the cattle we buy for our packing house but I don't know a thing about children. My father had just one way with us when we cut up—a fair-sized switch. That's gone out of style. Besides, I don't think it would be my style anyway. So I keep out of the way of all that. I guess kids are made so that they turn out all right if you give them time.

Goodness knows, I spend money enough on them, and glad to do it."

Mrs. Brown is always having something done to or for her children. She says, "I want the best there is for my children." They have regular medical and dental supervision, dancing and music lessons, summer camps, tickets to concerts, everything else that is recommended for the modern child. But Mrs. Brown herself lives on the excitement of "running things" where easy achievement brings success and recognition. So she is president of a half dozen community organizations and an officer in a half dozen more. Her thrill in life comes from these relatively superficial endeavors. She does her duty by her children in so far as she sees it, but she knows only the outsides of them, not their inner motives, questions, attitudes, notions, interests, yearnings and ideals.

Neither Mr. Green nor Mrs. Brown at all realizes that the children are having a hard time growing in fallow soil. They would be truly horrified to hear anyone say they neglected their children. They have not the remotest idea that creative interaction of an understanding sort between parents and children is essential to the creating of both personality and a family. Bringing up children takes a long time. When the parents are not themselves grown up, it is certain that the children's growth will be stunted no matter how well equipped with things and services.

#### THE HEART OF THE FAMILY

If these sketches have fulfilled their purpose, we have been able to sense again, and perhaps more deeply, that Something in genuine family living which is both holy and creative. As surely as they breathe, little children sense what it is that

their parents live for. They feel their parents struggle, they see them sacrifice themselves, *for the sake of* this or that trivial or great thing. A hundred events during the day make them aware of what it is their parents value. Indeed, family interaction is the interaction of the valuings of the parents with the valuings of their children, of the valuings of husband with those of wife, and of the valuings of children among themselves. If the parents are devoted to God as the Source of all value, nothing can keep the children from sensing this most important of all the valuings of the parents, and from interacting with it.

God is the creative source of all that is good. At the human level this source is most accessible through *creative interaction*. All genuine love induces creative interaction. It brings into freest and fullest *mutual self-expression* our hopes and fears, our losses and gains, our affections and aversions, our deepest commitments and our highest aspirations. Quite the opposite of fear, which is a recoiling, retreating *re-action*, love shows itself as outreaching, approaching *inter-action*. Love can work changes. It generates the trust that opens us so that we may undergo those transformations of our personalities required for the bettering of our relationships with our neighbors and with God. Love has been given us as the test of discipleship.

In a genuine family, love is always growing—growing greater, sounder, more potent. Each member shares interests with every other member and so participates meaningfully in as many worlds as there are members. In this way each becomes so richly sensitive and responsive to all the others that he is *deeply disposed* to consider their valuings in his thought and action, even when far away. This *growing disposition of sensitivity and responsiveness is growing love*. We cannot inter-

act on the most enriching and creative levels unless we sense and respond to all that goes to make up the unique personality of the other. Love does not grow either through independence in the sense of holding our own ground or through dependence in the sense of mere yielding or conforming. It comes through a sensitive and responsive interplay of the valuing of each so that, in the end, the valuing of the one are re-created by the valuing of the other. They are not duplicates. They are new creations.

The *family* is that relationship of parents and children, initiated and fostered by creative interaction, which generates, individualizes, and integrates personality, on the one hand, and promotes the growth of culture in the community, on the other hand. *God* is the Creativity of life which speaks to us through this creative interaction. God is this creative love that promotes growth. Of what are we aware, then, when we are aware of God? We are aware of that Creativity which sustains all our living and which yields quality and meaning in our experiences. *Religion* is that way of living which gives God the most important place in all situations.

## Chapter III

### KNOWING THE WAY OF GOD WHEN WE SEE IT

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The quest for certainty is a major human endeavor. Much fun is poked at all the "how-to" books, yet they are more widely read than anything else except the fiction which helps us to forget that we don't know how. It is natural to want to know for certain just what we should do and be if we are to get the most out of life. It is much easier to carry on those activities for which society has developed unmistakable directions—conventions, morals, maps, laws, traditions, rules for games and sports, stage directions for plays. We can move ahead more confidently when we know what we are doing, why we are doing it, and what the outcomes will be. Poise, courage, and drive are not hard to maintain when we are sure of our way. Especially in anything so momentous as doing the will of God we would like to be certain what his will is.

We smile today when we are told of those who have "discovered the will of God" by methods of chance. One such device, for instance, was that of blindfolding the self, opening the Bible at random, and pointing a key somewhere on the text. Then unblindfolded, the seeker puzzled over the verse pointed to until he had succeeded in twisting out of it some interpretation that seemed to apply to his specific situation. Many individuals believe that effective prayer means prayer which brings them specific directions in a certain situation. Many others feel

that a definite answer to a perplexity can be found somewhere in the Bible if you hunt far enough and understand well enough. Again, many turn for specific guidance to some authority who is considered to be "good," "religious," or a "holy man of God."

What is mistaken in all these ways of trying to learn the will of God is that the seekers expect to find some one ready-prepared direction that will tell them exactly what to do. The same mistake is made by many people who go to a consulting psychologist for guidance. What they really want is definite advice as to the correct choice of action in their particular situation. But *sound* guidance is rarely advice. It focuses on helping the seeker *grow* to the point where he himself can better his situation. Disappointment, bewilderment, a feeling of insecurity, conflict, a problem, or a crisis are actually signals to us that our old ways won't work in the present situation. If they were adequate, we would have gone ahead without thinking, without feeling any need to learn God's way. The basic question is not "*Now* what do I do?" but rather "What growth in me and change in my life situation does this disturbing problem call for?" "In Christ Jesus . . . (nothing) . . . availeth anything . . . but a new creature."

"But since I have been acting on the best I knew, how am I going to discover wherein I now need to grow?" Guidance comes from God by way of creative interaction with neighbors—geographical or cultural neighbors. If we have disobeyed that one of God's two greatest commandments, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," we *cannot* discover God's will because we have no "neighbors" with whom to carry on creative interaction. (This is clearly expressed by Paul: "That we henceforth be no more



children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine . . . but *speaking the truth in love*, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom *the whole body fitly joined together* and compacted by *that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*" I have italicized certain words so that in reading this familiar passage we shall not glide unseeing over its meaningful terms. Here are indicated the two aspects of God's will: (1) so to participate in a community of valuing that new insights and motives are generated in each member by "effectual" creative interaction among all members; (2) to promote further creative interaction by providing the required conditions.

We can never know fully the way of God far into the future. It is always too deep and rich and creative to be packed precisely into our little formulations. Creativity is at work unceasingly. If we could get the will of God delivered to us as a specific schedule for all our comings and goings we could not "grow up into him." We, ourselves, would not have any opportunity to participate in the creative process. Nor could a precise revelation of the will of God provide detailed instructions for dealing with all the new things that are being created, the "making increase . . . unto the edifying of itself in love."

To be sure, before we can know whether our insights, motives, attitudes, ideals, and other valuing as reshaped by interaction are truly worthy of being used as guides for living, we must test them. We must ascertain whether or not each *really promotes creative interaction*, for this is the crucial concern. To make such testing efficient, we must use whatever

appropriate means we have at our command—experimental operations, anticipatory realization of consequences, observation of similar procedures, study of relevant materials in literature, science, and art, consulting experienced people. The above Bible passage contains a statement of this test: “. . . according to the effectual working in the measure of every part . . . (so that ‘the whole’) . . . maketh increase . . . unto the edifying of itself in love.”

Does what we do promote fuller and freer and more honest creative interaction among all the members? That is the test. If it does, it is the way of God. Why? Because then the work of Creativity can go on at higher and deeper levels than before. Our own re-creation can be greater. We can more and more “grow up into him.” “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed *by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove* what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

In New York State there is an organization of farmers which meets the test with marked success. The group itself is a community of valuing where creative interaction is at work. The interests of every member are being re-created by the interpenetration of the interests of all. Further, the organization is providing conditions so that there can come even fuller, freer, and more honest creative interaction, first, among the members and, second, between the members and those outside interests which are related. This organization not only uses co-operative methods in purchasing and marketing. It has a staff of experts whose judgments and suggestions concerning weather conditions, pests, fertilizers, methods of work, market demands, and all sorts of other pertinent matters are available to every member at his own farm. Today there are in agricul-

ture and industry other examples of organizations both created by, and promotive of, the interaction of the valuings of all the members. Perhaps these are modern ways of access to the ancient Source of all human good.

This whole book is really an endeavor to show how the family can discover the way of God and secure the values of life found therein. In the old days, some churches tried to tell families exactly what they must do to meet God's will. They must not play cards, go to the theater—there was a long list. Today few churches provide specific recipes for salvation. But each family has within itself the power to become a means of the revelation of God's way. In so far as the family becomes a community of valuings through creative interaction among the members and with others, it *has* the way of God and *can learn* what that way requires.

Furthermore, in so far as each particular church becomes a growing community of valuings, it also becomes a means for the revelation of God's will to the participating members. In such a case, parents have access to God's will through two communities of valuings, the family and the church. This is essential, for the church as a community of valuings promotes the growth of the parents in somewhat the same way as the family as a community of valuings promotes the growth of the children. Such a church not only can prevent any one family from becoming insular, but can introduce valuings which greatly enrich family living.

#### THE REVELATION OF GOD IN JESUS CHRIST

The way of God is revealed in Jesus Christ more clearly and distinctly than anywhere else in the universe. Jesus Christ said, "I must work the works of him that sent me." To this end

he formed a little group which worked together in such a way that it generated a freedom and richness and world-transforming power greater than had ever been known. Through creative interaction within this group, the obscure fishermen and peasants who were the members were transformed into world-shaking figures.

Paul speaks stirringly of "the mystery of his will." He states the two aspects of "the mystery of Christ." First, that Christ "hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us" so that "all which were afar off," "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel," "strangers from the covenants of promise," have become "fellow citizens . . . of the household of God," they now "have access by one Spirit unto the Father." This reconciling "unto God in one body by the cross" of those of every station, class, race, and nation was a tremendous idea for the times of Paul. It is even more so today. Paul states as his own purpose "to make *all men* see what is *the fellowship* of the mystery."

The second aspect of the mystery of the will he states thus: ". . . God . . . for his great love wherewith he loved us . . . hath quickened us together with Christ . . . that in the ages to come he *might show the exceeding riches of his grace* in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by *grace* are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: . . . For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father . . . that he would grant you . . . to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, *being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to . . . know the love of Christ*, which passeth knowledge, that ye *might be filled with the fullness of God.*"

The Sermon on the Mount and the other teachings of Jesus only put into words the impulses and experiences that characterized the little group composed of Christ and his disciples, the first "fellowship of the mystery." The revelation of God in Christ is this creative interaction released and empowered. It was released by the life, death, and continued influence of Jesus Christ, combined with the Hebrew heritage and other social and historical conditions.

From what was this creative interaction released through Christ? It was released from a fivefold bondage which elsewhere most commonly constricts it. Except where Christ has released it, creative interaction is bound more or less (1) by the limitations of our congenial group; (2) by the limitations of specific values or causes which have strong appeal for us; (3) by the limitations of our unconscious desires, fears, and hates; (4) by the limitations of our specific order of life to which we cling; and (5) by the limitations of some existing community which cannot be carried to every class, age, race, kind, and condition of man. Creative interaction released through Christ is love going forth with such freedom and power that it overcomes whatever hinders or opposes its own working—meanness, resistance, indifference, evil doing.

Over and over in the New Testament comes the emphasis to "keep the unity," to "walk in love." The two greatest commandments are clear: to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind"; and to "love thy neighbor as thyself." The mark of discipleship is stated: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another."

All the teachings of Christ, however, are only the verbalization of the reality. The reality itself is that released interaction

which the fellowship of Jesus Christ manifested as the will of God and the way of life. That this way of living does not "come naturally" is well indicated by the frequent specific exhortations which Paul found it necessary to send to the new fellowships of grace and love which began to grow out of the first one.

The conditions of modern life make living for the sake of creative interaction no easier. Our present socioeconomic situation is due to the fact that the valuings of all affected members of our national community are not yet allowed to interact in the building up of our present industrial system. Certain interests have dominated and exploited the others, sometimes one set of interests, sometimes another. Democracy is the political term which describes an order of living that provides most fully the conditions required for creative interaction. Whether operating in the state or in the family, it is not easy. But it does yield more richness and freedom for human living than any other way. It is this way of living which the life and fellowship of Jesus Christ transmits to us. This is our Christian heritage.

Following Jesus Christ, then, does not mean finding and following some certain set of formulations for the will of God. Rather, it means discovering and setting up those conditions which will promote creative interaction. We must take life as it is, an ever-changing, ever-productive, stimulating, adventuresome, growing process. Our primary satisfaction cannot come in mere certitude, particularly in being certain that we are right. It must be found in the quality and meaning which creative interaction introduces.

Although it has become clear that we cannot set up formulas for the will of God, we can discover and improve the pro-

cedures by which we keep ourselves committed to it.

#### PROCEDURES FOR FINDING THE WAY OF GOD

A hundred times a day occasions arise in the family and neighborhood which call for creative interaction—perplexities, differences, maladjustments, special projects, the sharing of interests, and fun. Usually we are plunged into the process of creative interaction without realizing it. Too many times we are too shortsighted, or set on some idea of our own, or tired, or scared to carry on interaction to the point where it becomes creative, i.e. (1) brings increase of quality and meaning into our living; (2) transforms some of our faulty ideas, ways, and values; and (3) develops wider, deeper, and richer community amongst us. Yet it is through creative interaction that we most readily gain access to the Source of all value, to God. Therefore, we must:

- A. Keep preparing ourselves for more effective participation.
- B. Improve our methods and habits of participating.
- C. Become more steadfast in promoting creative interaction.

There can be no universal rules. Each individual or group will gradually develop those procedures which, after a considerable trying-out period, prove most effective. No procedure is ours until, like our own long-used tools, it is uniquely fitted to our uses. However, it may prove helpful to consider here some procedures which have served well in families with whom I have worked professionally on this undertaking. Because of the limits of a book, they are in outline form but will be\* referred to in appropriate places in the chapters to follow.

In the interest of keeping these procedures wholesome and

\*The number given each procedure in the following list will be used as an index for such terms in the chapters to follow as refer to this particular procedure. For instance, a superior 9 indicates that reference is made to the procedure numbered 9 in the list. See page 73 for first use of this superior figure.

effective, three suggestions should be kept in mind all the way through. First, only at certain times does one deliberately employ these and other procedures, and these times are indicated by some felt need or challenge. Most of the time their benefits are carried in the form of established attitudes, habits, and other valuings which have grown out of previous uses of them. Second, any tool can be used destructively, these procedures included. They cannot yield their constructive effectiveness if they are used to induce a self-righteousness or complacency or resignation that is mystically vague, lazy, and sentimental. They require the investment of intelligence, imagination, our several abilities, and a courageous and dynamic type of devotion. Third, whenever the expression, "commit this plan (or decision or valuing) to God" appears in the procedure, it is an abbreviation standing for one or the other of the following, depending on context: (1) in case of a *plan*, to resolve with one's whole self to follow this plan just so long as it is consistent with the Creativity being revealed in the interaction of valuings between the self and others; (2) in case of *some evil in oneself*, to resolve with one's whole self that this evil shall be subject to the transformative working of God's Creativity as operative in each situation; (3) in the case of a *problem*, to resolve with one's whole self that the solution of the problem shall be sought and found within the perspective of what is required for fullest creative interaction.

Techniques fill the pages from this point to the end of the chapter. Their meaning will not fully appear until they are practically applied to some question concerning how to find the will of God. Even then, only one or a few will be relevant to the problem of the moment.

Each procedure consists of two steps. *Orientation* is a period



of appreciative reflection wherein the worshiper intelligently and courageously explores the values, conditions, or other factors involved in his undertaking, and then reorients himself in the light of his findings and insights. *Commitment* is concentrated worship, consisting of self-searching, confession, renunciation, creative planning, vivifying adoration of the great and the Greatest, and *specific* commitment of the self to the Creativity of God.

#### A. Preparing for Participation

1. Worshipful acceptance of persons and situations as they actually are, usually following an experience of deep disappointment, exasperation, or disgust.

Orientation. (a) Recognition that persons and situations are, in any *immediate* sense, as unchangeable as salt, rain, or the railroad timetable. Successful dealing with these latter requires appreciation of them as they are *until they have changed*. Persons and situations merit treatment *at least as considerate* as mere things. (b) The attitudes, tastes, intentions and other valuings coming from persons and situations as they now are have unique value, and *may* represent human goods greater than those we are looking for. The unprejudiced explorer's attitude is called for.

Commitment. (a) Seek out what it is in the self that makes one irritated with the other person or with the situation, and make commitment of this finding about the self to God. (b) Worshipfully appreciate the admirable or significant aspects in the objects concerned. (c) Develop a specific plan of action, put into the form of a brief ritual, for guiding own conduct during next encounters with the objects involved.

Commit this plan of action to God. (*d*) In so far as possible, see to it that the self is in possession of a surplus of physical energy before the next encounter. Difficult interaction requires much more energy than usual interaction. (*e*) When appropriate, repeat the ritual which now has acquired specific and effectual influence over behavior.

2. Worshipful self-examination when some failing, disagreement, adverse criticism, or conflict, like an X-ray, reveals faults or limitations in the self.

Orientation. (*a*) Recognition of benefit coming through this new awareness of one's own characteristics, and acceptance of the challenge to new growth. (*b*) Objective appraisal of the context in which the self-revelation took place, discarding trivial and prejudiced aspects to uncover main revelation. (*c*) Courageous examination of one's revealed limitation or error.

Commitment. (*a*) Seek out that in the self which blocked appropriate or adequate response, and make commitment of this to God. (*b*) Develop a plan of action for the illumination and transformation of these fallow or deformed areas of the self, and commit this plan to God. (*c*) Develop a plan for re-entering the situation under the guidance of this more searching self-commitment. (*d*) Petition for the strength to keep these new developments in the self committed in the midst of temptations to reassert one's old will or way.

3. Worshipful renunciation, usually following a temptation, or an inner conflict, that is, a conflict of desires.

Orientation. (*a*) The discipline of sacrifice is never justified unless a greater value is involved, and so in actuality this experience of giving up a cherished good is more an annunciation

of the better than a renunciation of the good. (b) The reason renunciation is even then painful is that the good in the present value or situation is already known by long tasting of it, but the announced good in the new is known only by head, not by heart, while its restricting requirements seem already to cramp and bruise one. (c) There is no wrong in any suffering. The crucified life from the time of Christ on has involved suffering. The only wrong is suffering in vain because the self refuses to be transformed. (c) Inertia, the resistance to the disturbances involved in change, is one thing that is making renunciation hard.

Commitment. (a) Give the self up completely to a tasting, imaginative or actual, of the new human goods which are taking the place of the old favorites, or to the Creativity of life if there are no new values yet discernible. Realize that the only thing which can drain off the power of old desires is stirring appreciation of the new values which replace them. (b) Deliberately and appreciatively go into some experience wherein one can serve the new value. (c) Work out a plan so that the old desire or "good" is excluded absolutely and finally from any place in living, and commit this plan to God. (d) Make a plan which decisively introduces the new value into the way of life so that going back is harder than going on; then commit this plan to God. (e) Frequently celebrate the new value.

4. Worshipful realization of the unfailing presence of God, usually when experiencing doubt or isolation or despair or helplessness.

Orientation. (a) The Creativity of God is operating about one all the while, although there are many things which can

keep one from acute awareness of it. (b) According to the teachings of Christ, one can most readily experience the Creative love of God through creative interaction with other persons. (c) When one loses the sense of God's presence, it is an indication that one has excommunicated himself.

Commitment. (a) Think back over recent association with others to discover whether it usually proved creative or merely casual or sterile. Examine to see what factors hindered creative interaction, factors in the self (preoccupation, fatigue, fear, prejudice, or other), or in the situation (distractions, artificiality, contrary attitudes or values, or other). Commit these hindering factors to God. (b) Seek out some appropriate group, preferably "a worshipful fellowship," and participate sensitively in its experiences, even if its procedures are unfamiliar. Re-examine the self in the light of contrasts, disagreements, or conflicts occurring during or following the meeting. (c) Develop a brief ritual to use just before participating in important interaction with others, a ritual summing up newly emerging insights. (d) Note and relive appreciatively such association as did prove stirring, enriching, or re-creative. Recognize this as experience of Creative Love.

#### B. Participating in Creative Interaction

5. Tactful expression of one's own valuing, especially when interacting with new associates, "difficult" individuals, and persons "on the defensive" or of different cultural background.

Orientation. (a) The valuing of the self are likely to seem odd, unwarranted, or sometimes even cruel to another person. They must not be either imposed or suddenly flashed upon him, for experience has shown this to be painful and inductive of resistance or obstinacy. (b) To know how best to present

the valuings of the self, one must understand the other person and how he tends to interact. Is either of us unusually slow or quick to react? hot-tempered? ultraconservative? (c) Realize that more valuings of each are like those of others than are different. Start with common valuings. (d) Since the valuings of the self are never complete or perfect, it is wise to check well before presenting them to others.

Commitment. (a) Examine the valuings of the self and hold these up, courageously and worshipfully, into the illumination of God. (b) Work out a practical plan that is considerate of the characteristics of both parties and of the nature of their situation whereby to present the now re-created valuings of the self. (c) Worshipfully prepare the self for the possible requirement of renunciation and transformation of one's own tendencies, that is, ward off one's own resistance to the work of Creativity. (d) In actual situations receive the valuings of the other appreciatively until they can be tested. Recommit the self to Creativity of God before answering the other.

6. Creative discussion, needed not only where there is bewilderment as to what values are involved or the best way to attain chosen values, but also where there seem to be no values and no way.

Orientation. (a) The Creativity of God speaks through creative interaction: "Where two or three are gathered together . . ." (b) If any member of the group holds his valuings to be beyond improvement, this interaction is blocked. (c) The expressed valuing of any one person is *not his own*; it is the outcome of previous creative interaction. It was caught out of some earlier experience of interaction and can only be enriched when it is caught into a new experience. (d) Therefore, the *only* way to win in a discussion does not consist in

having one's valuing proved correct but in coming out with one or more enriched or transformed valuing. In order to win, then, everyone must enter his valuing as freely and fully and honestly as possible. Second, everyone must give recognition to the source of these whenever appropriate. Third and hardest, everyone must take his own name-label off his valuing at the moment he enters them into the communal seed-bed. Finally, the greatest satisfactions must consist in anticipating and experiencing the exciting growth of a new and better valuing.

Commitment. (a) Commit the abilities of the self to the Creativity of God as he works through creative discussion. This implies both worship and, to the extent the subject merits it, intelligent preparation of the self regarding the nature and important implications of the problem. (b) Commit the abilities of the self to the furthering of the greatest degree of creative interaction possible when once it starts. A ritual is almost certainly a necessity here, so that in the excitement of the discussion the spirit developed during commitment can speak rather than the self-protecting or self-vaunting impulses. (c) Commit the self to be transformed if and when self-shaking new valuing are developed.

#### 7. Dealing with self-promotive characteristics in others.

Orientation. (a) These self-loving characteristics of the other are founded upon mistakes in past training and to this extent are not the sole responsibility of the particular person. (b) He has received more satisfaction out of self-loving behavior than out of socially interested behavior for some reason, and so he not only will resist transforming influences, but may project all manner of faults onto others or build illusions by which to

exonerate himself. Therefore anyone dealing with him must keep his own bearings. To be crushed by his ugly ways or to be deluded by his illusions will only strengthen his characteristics. (c) What he needs is some way of feeling within himself a confidence or adequacy or security or power that is socially directed instead of self-directed. Situations should be built to take care of this need. (d) The self has a number of ways as defeating to the other as his ways are to the self. Indeed, the self may have worse self-promotive ways than the other.

Commitment. (a) First of all, do the thing that no one but the self can do, work on the self's own provoking and self-promotive ways. Commit these to the Creativity of God. Particularly take note of those ways that definitely intensify the self-directed expressions of the other. (b) Consecrate the interaction, episode by episode, to Creative Love. A ritual is almost essential here, one short enough to use in the intervals between responses to the other. The ritual might be simple, "Into thy hands, O God of love, I commit my part in this." (c) Employ technique C 10.\* (d) If he is a religious person, ask him if he will undertake with oneself the definite submission to God of each new important desire or plan or demand affecting both on at least two successive days *before* expressing it. (e) Commit enough time and energy to creative interaction with *other* persons and groups to increase the physical, mental, social, and religious resources available in this relationship. Since the valuings of the exceptionally self-promotive person tend to be excessively distorted, it is essential that one's own should be kept more than usually subject to correction through interaction with outside persons.

\* See p. 63, this chapter.

8. Burying the past, usually necessary after a catastrophic event, a wrong choice, or a quarrel wherein one has attacked the other or cherished values have been destroyed.

Orientation. (a) Nothing in the past is of any worth except what has been learned about the values that were involved in the event. (b) Restoration of the wrecked order of life should be made to the extent possible and fitting, but restitution at its highest means putting the whole relationship or way of life on a *better* basis. (c) Nothing can ever be forgotten by trying to forget. The only successful way "to forget" is to drain off the power of the past experience by more wholehearted devotion to new interests, plans, and values.

Commitment. (a) Discover what fault, fixation, or limitation in the self increased the pain and devastation of the regretted experience, and commit this to God. (b) Based upon newly emerging insights, develop a plan which betters conditions both for the ruptured relationship and for daily living. Use it as a new basis for action. (c) Select some constructive, specific thought or action to be instantly substituted for any recurring memory of the regretted event. (d) Make such approaches or restitution as will be most effective in restoring creative interaction. (e) Distinguish the values that have emerged out of the event, celebrate these, sharing them where possible with the other participants.

### C. Promoting Creative Interaction

9. Worshipful attitude toward growth, needed by parents and teachers whose expectations and ideals are likely to be used either as set guides or as measures for passing judgment.

Orientation. (a) Each person is unique and his future ful-



fillment is never wholly predictable. (b) No person is wise enough to construct an adequate set of molds for shaping the growth of another. (c) All that a parent or teacher can do is to provide conditions favorable for growth. Growth itself is the work of God. (d) These conditions of growth must be different for each individual, and for the same individual at different times.

Commitment. (a) By noting what disappoints one or makes one indignant, make an honest list of one's chief expectations and ideals. Examine these to find out what they serve—adult comfort and desires or the greatest possible fulfillment of the child? Hold them up into the illumination of God. Re-create them truer to the requirements of growth. (b) When the behavior of a child seems disappointing or bad, find out what *he* was after by so behaving before passing judgment. Stop to appreciate with him this sought value before dealing with his way of going after it. (c) Through a process of co-operative evaluation (seeing through each other's eyes), work toward a community of valuing with the child. (d) During serious episodes of discipline, suspend parental pronouncements and punishment until after a period of self-commitment to God by the parent. (e) Through creative interaction with other parents and leaders, ferret out those conditions of growth that are not understood and launch group effort to increase understanding of the laws of growth.

10. Loving and worshiping into being the potentialities of another, needed in all guidance of growth but also in situations where one is tempted to try to reform another person.

Orientation. (a) Every individual has more potentialities than he will ever fully realize, but the more he can realize the

more rich will be his life and that of the community. (b) New dispositions, aptitudes, and aspirations are hesitant and uneven in their early forming and expression. They send out feelers to test the favorableness of conditions. (c) Clumsiness and mistakes are likely to be frequent, but the product is not the important thing. Emerging potentialities need the nurture of frequent reinforcement and appreciation. (d) Self-confidence comes through sensing the confidence of others. (e) There must be maintained a community ready to respond tenderly yet consistently and honestly to expressions of these developing potentialities.

Commitment. (a) Remind the self that it is holy ground where good is growing, and commit one's resources to the necessary but humble task of providing such conditions as are possible. Commit plans for these conditions to God. (b) Rejoice and give thanks for manifestations of emerging potentialities, even when they upset one's own conscious or unconscious predictions. (c) Reconstruct plans for providing conditions as further manifestations indicate the need. Commit these to God. (d) Open the self to the widening universe now appearing, and appropriately re-form one's order of living. Commit this transformed way of living to God. (e) In the family community, celebrate delicately and appropriately the expressions of the emerging potentialities. Such celebration may be direct or indirect.

II. Worshipful development of programs and schedules which provide important conditions for creative interaction.

Orientation. (a) Since the family is a group, there must be some agreement concerning the arrangements for living so that each can know what he can count on and in what ways

others count upon him. (b) Unless there are stable foundations in the form of programs, the members will not feel the confidence and freedom to invent and create beyond what now is. (c) These foundations cannot be stable, however, unless all the members participate appropriately in the laying of them. (d) These programs, then, must provide not only for efficiency, convenience, and security, but for creative interaction that is courageous and free to innovate and explore.

Commitment. (a) Recognize that every person regards his views as right, else he would change them. Bring sympathetic group examination and criticism to bear on differing views through creative interaction.\* (b) Prepare the self for extra demands upon patience and understanding which group development of family programs makes—building up a surplus of physical energy, frequent vivifying of the will of God through worship, and use of other resources. (c) Encourage all members to become as fully informed as possible concerning the matters to be discussed so as to avoid nonconstructive conflict and to contribute more soundly and richly to creative interaction. (d) Where effective, bring outside resources into creative discussions pertaining to family programs, such as families respected for their experience, or authorities on family life. (e) Maintain newly made arrangements only so long as they promote creative interaction. (f) Train the self to the point where it is second nature to see programs and schedules in terms of their effect upon creative interaction in the family. (g) Make sure the children see the connection between family-developed programs and increase in value to the family, never by preaching but through co-operative evaluation and appropriate celebration.

12. Creative experimentation, important when the family seems

\* See page 34.

ready for some step forward or a new venture, when the present way of living is disrupted by unsolved problems, and when there seems to be no way to go.

Orientation. (a) While programs take care of the relatively dependable aspects of living, there are many aspects which need more creative treatment. (b) The experimental approach is helpful because one is kept conscious of the fact that he must be on the alert, be adaptable, and yet be constant in his devotion to the values to be attained. (c) In the experimental approach, therefore, one must have more reserves to call upon, physical, mental, social, and religious. These must be constantly increased. (d) The *quality* of the interaction of valuings in the experimental approach is of crucial importance. Consequently, this way of living requires the deepest type of self-commitment.

Commitment. (a) Examine the plan that is to guide the experiment in living to see if it seems the most effective now possible for making accessible the desired values. Commit it to God. (b) Develop a ritual embodying the convictions and faith which are undergirding the self as one launches into the unknown. Use it often. (c) Vivify the values sought until one becomes sensitized to recognize them when they come. (d) Throw the self wholeheartedly but alertly into the experiment, investing the self as completely as the nature of the experiment warrants. (e) Meet as a group frequently for interaction of valuings concerning developments and emergents. Commit these to God. (f) Examine the self periodically in relation to the progress of the experiment to see what fixations or other hindrances may be removed through being re-committed to the Creativity of God. (g) Celebrate alone and with the group the values which emerge.

SEARCH, SERVICE, AND ADORATION

These procedures are some guideposts among many possible ones for finding and living in the way of God. Instead of providing for a periodic reinforcement of the self and the group, they aim to keep continuously open the way to God, our Source of all value. Instead of suggesting certain forms of service, they put all we do under the supreme control of Creative Love. Instead of setting aside some specific occasion for worship, they make all living worship-full.

## CREATING THE FAMILY

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How is a family created? Certainly not through events—a wedding ceremony, setting up housekeeping, or bringing children into the world. A genuine family comes only by growing. Fullness of growth takes a long time. But time does not create the family either. Certain creative processes must be generated and become powerful, as in all growing things. These processes must be powerful indeed, for they must transform highly individualistic persons into a true human community wherein each richly nurtures every other according to his needs and capacities, and each invests wholeheartedly all he is and has in values which the new unity makes manifest, values greater than himself. All this is love in action, the Creativity of Life at work.

How does this come about? Through the sharing of valuings and interests ever more completely and at ever deeper levels. This process of creative interaction is at the optimum at those times when the members of the family commit themselves anew to God as the *Source* of all values. This allows them to relinquish their individualistic ways without intolerable agony once creative interaction with other members has revealed faults or limitations. Then prime satisfactions come not through egoistic achievements or family status or affluence but in the increase of quality and meaning which creative interaction brings into life. As parents, then, we look for evidences of growth in our children and ourselves—ability (1) to participate effectively and zestfully in creative interaction, and (2) to provide the conditions this family-creating process requires.

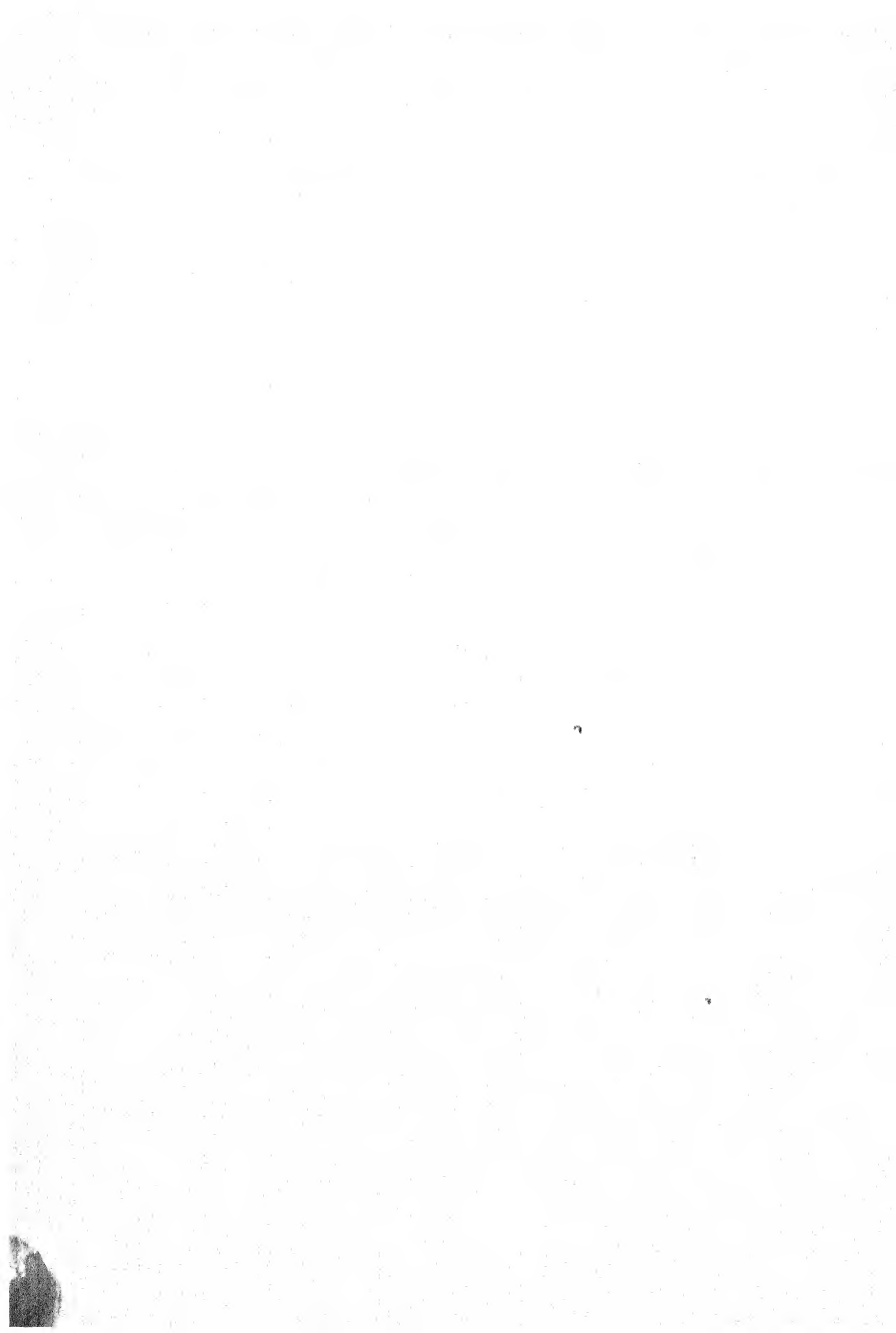
PART II  
THE CREATIVE FAMILY

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Stand fast therefore in the liberty  
wherewith Christ hath made us free,  
and be not entangled again with the yoke of  
bondage. . . .  
only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh,  
but by love serve one another. . . .  
The love of Christ constraineth us.  
In Christ Jesus . . .  
(nothing) . . . availeth any thing . . .  
but a new creature, . . .  
Therefore if any man be in Christ,  
he is a new creature:  
old things are passed away;  
behold, all things are become new.

*Galatians 5:1, 13; 6:15*

*II Corinthians 5:14, 17*





## Chapter IV

### THE MARRIAGE TRIANGLE

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The word "married" can be very misleading. It is frequently used erroneously to refer to two individuals who were legally licensed to marry years ago, but whose real marriage has hardly begun. Even an "impressive church wedding" is not certain to issue in an impressive achieving of marriage. Marriage is not an event. That is the wedding. A wedding is no more the equivalent of marriage than is legal election to the presidency of the United States the equivalent of serving as president.

What is involved in marriage? *Marriage* is the *achieving* of a certain kind of interdependent relationship between a man and a woman. This relationship is the interweaving of their interests, even their deepest and greatest, in such a way that they find freest and fullest and most honest self-expression of their appreciations, favorable and adverse. Through this creative interaction, all the happenings in their world take on more quality and significance for both than would be possible for either of them if living alone. The meanings of life grow more wide, more deep, and more preciously intimate. These experiences are manifestations of love at work.

Why is marriage so often referred to as sacred? What makes marriage sacred?

Briefly put, the presence of God in the relationship. If the "marriage" is truly marriage, God is present in it whether the

couple acknowledge him or not. Is this a mere pietistically conventional statement? Observable facts prove not.

It is always God who builds the enriching unity in human relationships. God is this interweaving of our deepest and greatest interests and freest, fullest, and most honest self-expression of each to each. Knowing him so, we can see that God is present in genuine marriage. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Even the most superficially popular estimate recognizes any marriage as a travesty if it is not a coming together in this way.

There are such travesties. There are weddings of persons who think that marriage is the way to some desired individual satisfaction—sexual, financial, promotive, protective, or other. But such weddings seldom initiate sacred marriage. Our chief problem concerning success in marriage is not that of decreasing divorce or of improving its social odor. Rather, it is providing better conditions for the guidance of choice of mate and of achieving real marriage.

In spite of all our ignorance and clumsiness, however, thousands upon thousands do achieve marriage. They develop genuine interaction to a degree where the relationship is a creative one in at least a part of their living. Fortunately for mankind, there are at work persistent forces which tend to catch the man and the woman into a growing web of connectedness. Wife and husband are coerced to find their way to the greater and deeper values of life by way of that kind of interaction which is love. Through the interaction of their valuing, their personalities are continuously enriched and recreated. These are indications that God is present in the marriage. "... he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and

God in him." Could it be more clearly stated? The marriage relationship, more than any other, is the situation which makes God continuously accessible. Where there is worshipful realization<sup>4</sup> of this unfailing presence of God, the more limited type of interaction between husbands and wives is turned into a more enriching experience which ever creates life anew for them.

### THE TRANSFORMING TRIANGLE

Josiah Royce, the greatest among our earlier American philosophers, wrote a small book with a rather uninviting title, *War and Insurance*. But in it is a telling statement. He says that two people cannot successfully deal with each other without an intermediary in matters involving important personal interests. This is why we must have agents—real estate, legal, insurance, and others. This is why we need arbitration in strikes and wars.

He makes clear the picture of the sort of situation we all have experienced. I am trying to sell my house. I say I must have \$5,000. The prospective purchaser says he will pay not a cent more than \$4,000. I think that my price is right and that I can bring his offer up. He thinks his offer is right and that he can bring my price down. Each has taken a position. Each is pulling at opposite ends of a straight line. But where an agent agitates back and forth, neither takes a final position and in the end some plan can be worked out to which both agree. There are only two directions in which to move when we work on a straight line. A triangle gives more room.

In marriage, God is this intermediary. He is the Greater Third. He provides a higher reference for the husband and wife, greater than either of them can have otherwise. There

are several aspects of marriage which require the roominess of this triangle. We shall discuss three of these.

#### THE CONTRIBUTION OF WOMAN AND MAN

The husband and wife each brings to marriage a different point of view, different experiences, ideas, memories, convictions, that is, different valuings. These are different in two ways: first, as the valuings of any two persons are different; second, as the valuings of a girl-become-woman-in-a-certain-social-situation differ from those of a boy-become-man-in-another-certain-social-situation. It is these latter valuings which concern us most at the moment. The husband interacts not only with the girl-become-woman, but with this particular product of some particular section of society's treatment of female persons. And so correspondingly does the wife interact with her husband as a particular product of society's treatment of male persons.

It is essential that both husband and wife recognize that social man-patterns and woman-patterns are interwoven in their dealings with each other.

There are many ways in which they can fail to do so. They can compete with each other. Either can impose upon the other, or exploit him, or live as a parasite on him. Together they may decide just how far each may go in having his own way, so that each has his own independent territory of rights and responsibilities. In the majority of cases, there is profligate waste of contributions of both husband and wife, usually caused by utter failure to understand what is involved in marriage. They have no remote idea of the untold resources for rich living made available through achieving creative interaction between the contributions of woman and of man.

What is the way to this enrichment? Each must give himself more to the love growing between them than to his own specific values and valuings. If the personal organization of each is sufficiently subject to the higher control of love, he will see and appreciate the new values which emerge even when these conflict with his own. There are certain procedures which are helpful in doing so: constructive presentation of individual valuings,<sup>5</sup> creative discussion,<sup>6</sup> creative experimentation,<sup>12</sup> and worshipful acceptance<sup>1</sup> of the other as he is. These have been described in the latter half of Chapter III. They are among the means essential to growth and enrichment in marriage.

How does growth take place in marriage? By the loving into being,<sup>10</sup> the worshiping into being and expression, of the potentialities of wife by husband and of husband by wife. Present creative interaction is preparing for them greater things than eye can now see or ear hear. Bringing all these into being and expression through love and worship requires that each shall make creative interaction the most important thing in his living, that he shall realize that this is the Creativity of God and so give himself to it to be transformed as it requires. Where this is achieved, marriage is not man-nature in conflict with woman-nature, but rather the integration of their contributions into a more roomy life, more abundant with values.

#### SOURCE OF REASSURANCE

Before the wedding, the wife has been living in her own world, the husband in his. Each feels at home here and nowhere else. Then, with the wedding, they assume that these two worlds will become one automatically. Actually, without realizing it, each expects the other to come over and inhabit his world, abandoning his own, not realizing that neither world

is large enough for two growing persons. Consequently, whenever anything threatens the order or foundations of the world of either, his confidence in himself and in life is shaken. He reaches out for some sort of reassurance, someone who will bolster up his separate world. The damage caused by these temporary desertions with their distorted betrayals of intimate relationship is beyond calculation.

But there is recourse for the religious husband and wife. God can be the agent. Devotion to Him can work three wonders. First, it introduces the transforming roominess of a triangular relationship. Turning to Him can result in a point of view more objective than that of either husband or wife. This point of view is what they see when they survey their situation from the standpoint of creative interaction and what they see with the insight and vision generated within them when they make absolute commitment of their individual viewpoints to creative interaction.

When husband or wife runs to some relative or acquaintance for bolstering-up or consolation, it is almost sure to be to someone who will "take his side." When one turns to God, he must turn over his world with all its ways and valuings, he must *submit* "his side" and thus achieve greater objectivity than when he turns to some human source of reinforcement.

Second, by holding up his world into the illumination of God he is rendered pliable and ready for the transformation of his own valuings. He is no longer dependent upon the continuance of the order and foundations of his own little world for his faith in himself and in life. He has located his source of assurance elsewhere.

Third, he comes to see that he and his mate cannot live in either private world, even by turns. He begins to realize that

they must build a third, mutual world out of their two private worlds. It is only in this third world that they can find dependable security and self-confidence. Whenever a husband or wife says to me in consultation, "She's told you her side, now I'll tell you mine," I am reasonably sure that I have a case of two people trying to live a common life while each remains firmly rooted in his own private, prewedding world.

One of the most treacherous experiences a husband or wife can have may be launched by an upheaval in the private world of either of them. Seeking a haven in time of stress can easily assume the form of an infatuation for another person. The husband or wife involved is likely to call this "finding the right one too late." That this latter cannot be true grows from the fact that there is never any "*the* right one." What really happens is this: The one whose world is being shaken, the one who feels that he must have sympathy and reinforcement, is suffering pain in one or two or three sore spots. He is so conscious of these that he is likely to feel that anyone who does not make him sore in these particular ways is "the right one." He does not realize that every person in the world, as a mate, would have his own particular limitations and faults, would make his own particular type of sore spots. Failure to appreciate this is what is behind the current large number of shoppers' weddings in which some individual "is married" and divorced many times in quick succession. Each time he is looking for something he missed the previous time, but, unwittingly, losing something he did have that time. He is a "spoiled child," culturally speaking. He wants to find a mate who will live in his own private world and tell him how perfectly wonderful a world it is. He doesn't feel at home otherwise.

The cure for this immature loneliness, strangeness, insecurity, and lack of confidence in self and life is not in finding someone who will tell us that our world with its present organization of interests is all right. It is found in throwing ourselves into the building of a greater new world. This is achieved by committing oneself more completely into a more dynamic and wholehearted sharing of interests with the present mate. We need to locate those deeper levels of communion below the surface tangle of the conflicts between the respective orders of our two lives. The procedures of worshipful self-searching<sup>2</sup> and worshipful renunciation<sup>3</sup> (already discussed) will be of assistance here.

#### THE SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP

Fortunately for husbands and wives, there are certain physiological facts which tend to keep sexual intercourse from being nothing more than physical interaction. Chief among these facts are the following: the average male is so constructed that he experiences periodically strong physical tensions in the genital organs and is made restless until this tension (appetite) is released; the average female is so constructed that there is no such specific tension in her genital organs until she has been psychologically stimulated, that is, conditioned for sexual intercourse. This means that each particular husband must become sensitized and responsive to the nature and interests of his particular wife if he is to initiate an approach to sexual intercourse which will stimulate and arouse her into interaction.

In the thirty years since I began to work on problems of marital adjustment, the most common cause of lack of response on the part of the wife has been the failure of the husband to be sensitive and responsive to the wife's personality



and interests. "Everything works out wonderfully when we are on good terms," the wives say, or "When he treats me as though I were somebody," or "When he shows that I really mean something to him," or (sadly enough) "When he is kind to me." The chief reason why so many husbands fail here is that they do not understand. They feel injured because their wives are less eager for intercourse than they, not knowing these psychological differences and to what they point as requirements for courting.

But these differences are a great gift to marriage. They force the husband to become interested in all that is important to his wife. Particularly, the wife's concern for the baby increases his concern for the child. In order to have fully satisfactory sex relations, there must be reasonably satisfactory personal relations between husband and wife. When there is trouble between them, these physiological differences show in their reactions. The husband tends to say nothing and to grope for restoration of unity through sexual intercourse. The wife tends to talk it out and feels that sexual intercourse in the circumstances would be a violation of relationship and of personality. In fact, the average wife *cannot* respond until the trouble is adjusted; that is, until the love-relation is in working order again. Since the sexual urge in the husband is usually strong enough to initiate a move to break a deadlock, and since a wife is usually sufficiently conditioned to her husband to *want* a fullness of relationship, there is a continuing coercion upon both husband and wife to deal creatively with all differences, to keep the relation in good order.

Most of the problems called "sex problems" are not literally such, but are problems that have to do with these valuing of husband and wife and with the reaction of each to the valu-

ings of the other. Consequently, most of the difficulties associated with sexual relations can be met by dealing with the real causes as they are found in other aspects of the marital relationship. The sexual relationship is the occasion where these other difficulties most frequently show up. The most common of these difficulties, according to my records, is individualism. Procedures have been described for dealing with these in the latter part of Chapter III.

There are other aspects of the marriage relation which profit equally by religious treatment. There is the ordeal of burying the past and making a fresh start with all the disturbances and apprehension this involves. There is the matter of creative quarreling and the obligation to be considerate. But the principles and procedures are the same. It is a matter of making the *growth* of love through creative interaction more important than anything else and putting our best into it. Then there cannot be "my way," but only this new way worked out together through love.

#### PROVIDING FAVORABLE CONDITIONS

No one can make love grow, but any one of us can provide conditions which further its growth. Two types of effort are often required: removing hindering and destructive conditions; building up promotive conditions. Here are the beginnings of a list of each of these as they pertain to marriage.

##### Removing obstructive conditions:

Refraining from sharing such interests with other persons of the opposite sex as are likely to draw one into a relationship that is a threat to the marriage relation. We *can* help to keep ourselves from entangling alliances by *never starting* to share such implicating interests with the opposite sex as would lead to intimacy.

Good self-management whereby each takes care of those matters which affect his personal attractiveness: hanging up his clothes in his own closet, grooming, handling the taking of medicine and care of bodily discharges as unobtrusively as possible, appreciatively selecting clothing and various possessions, and other such matters.

Never belittling each other by act, word, or implication before others, and never "selling the other out" for the sake of vaunting one's own ego or other self-interested cause.

Never pointing out limitations in the family or background of each other, unless it becomes necessary to dispel illusions of the other which stand in the way of creative interaction, and then never with the *intention* of hurting, though it may hurt.

Never flattering each other, nor building up confidence in areas where there is nothing to support it. Never deceiving for any reason.

Halting the self on every occasion when one is inclined to feel that the other intended to hurt him and suspending judgment until the other has been given a full opportunity to interpret what he or she did.

Speeding out-of-earshot when so angry or under such severe tension that an explosion is imminent. Whatever needs to be dealt with is better handled when one has not lost his temper or poise. One who has lost his temper is "not all there." It is not fair to deal with him until he is himself again.

Building promotive conditions:

Such an organization of the personal program of husband and wife as will reserve sufficient time and energy for their relationships.

Refraining from taking or announcing final positions, whether in the form of dictates, policies, plans, standards, or threats.

Periodic examination of one's expectations and consequent disappointments in the light of the realities, the real persons, things, conditions with which one is actually living.

Keeping open the channels of full, free, and honest intercommunication at whatever cost, but using tact in selecting occasions and methods.

Frequent expression of appreciation of specific aspects of each other, of the delight each feels in the other, and of other forms of love.

Always having at least one new important interest in process of development, an interest which requires much creative interaction. A developing hobby, a community project, a new house, and a baby are possible examples.

Leaving the interested public in no doubt of the absolute commitment of each to the marriage. This is not a matter of public demonstration but of genuine attitude as revealed in the many activities of group life.

Developing practical techniques especially adapted to this one marriage by which problems, difficulties, differences, faults, and other disrupting aspects are creatively treated. This requires time and all available skill.

Developing worshipful procedures especially adapted to this one marriage whereby each alone and both together make progress in recommitting their valuings and themselves to God.

## Chapter V

### THE TRUSTEES OF THE FAMILY

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Recently I was working with a businessman on a complex problem. He was under such tension that he needed some relief even before the problem was resolved. I asked him what form of recreation he would find the most releasing, enticing, and re-creating. His vigorous answer came instantly: "I would get more sheer fun and lift out of going on some kind of jaunt with first one of my boys and then the other than in any other way. I know. I've tried it. We have great times together."

Contrast the implications in this declaration with those in a statement made by an elementary teacher. Her school is in one of the better residential sections of the city. "Teaching in our school is an altogether different thing from what it was ten years ago when people here were mostly strangers to each other. Those first years of teaching were a sheer delight to me. But I don't teach much any more. I can't. I have to spend so much time getting the children back to something like normal. They're dangerously high-strung, impetuous and notionate. I've unobtrusively canvassed the home situations of all the children in my class. On the average, over half of them do not see either one of their parents during at least two days each week. They are sufficiently fed and clothed and otherwise equipped with material goods, but in all other respects they are left to drift and fend for themselves much of the

time. They are as unstable and unpredictable as Boston weather. They have no sense of value and they resist any activity which involves even a small degree of concentration, of self-discipline, of self-devotion. Their parents are grand to talk with; they thank me for suggestions; but they never get around to their main job in life. A school cannot do the work of the home. It is neither equipped nor organized for it. But when the home does not do its part, we teachers are terrifically handicapped. What's worse, it takes all the joy out of our work. My heart aches so for these little deserted gamins."

#### OUR TRUSTEESHIP

Of what are we parents the trustees?

Chiefly of two things, each of which is of paramount importance. First, we are trustees of persons—of our children and of the mothers and fathers of our children. Second, we are trustees of the conditions of growth, particularly of the conditions essential to creative interaction through which personality develops in the individual and culture in the community.

Doesn't the management of the mothers and fathers of our children mean us? Yes, but the management which each of us parents must give to himself as a mother or father is necessarily different in many respects from the management given himself as an individual. For instance, as individuals, we may feel that we cannot take time to rest. "There is so much to be done. I don't dare get behind." But when we have discernment enough to see ourselves as the fathers or mothers of our children, we realize that suitable rest for the children's mother and father is tremendously important for both the children's sake and society's sake.

Not only must we take care of *ourselves* because we are

mothers and fathers, but even more important, *the wife must take care of the husband* as father to the children and *the husband of the wife* as mother to the children. Taking care of each other means appropriate providing for physical needs and comforts. But it means much more too. It requires intelligent, understanding concern for each other's interests, ambitions, condition, limitations, talents, enthusiasms, and problems. As we have already noted, this involves the loving into being, the worshiping into being and expression,<sup>10</sup> of unguessed potentialities, each in the other.

The kind of mother the children have depends substantially upon what kind of trustee the husband is for the mother. The kind of father the children have is affected markedly by the kind of trustee the wife is for the father. When a man and a woman marry, each entrusts to the other the very best of himself, not only what he is but what he may become. This is an enormous trust. To betray it means to deprive the children of part of their heritage. Father and mother must each keep in mind this trusteeship of the other when dealing with problems and decisions which concern such significant matters as choice of job, place of residence, extent and kind of outside activities, divorce, social affiliations, and relations with school and church.

There is another important aspect of the trusteeship of mother and father for each other. It involves the building up in the children by each parent of appreciation for the other parent. A parent who is left alone to head a family has a problem that can never be adequately solved. He cannot build up in his children an appreciation of his own values and valuings as well as could his mate. To try to do so may make him seem selfish or bigoted or conceited. A relative or a house

guest is likely to be in the same position unless the parents understand their trusteeship and make it a part of their business to build up the appreciation of their children for the visitor whose values and valuings are bound to seem strange at first, sometimes even eccentric.

Children naturally tend to want what they like and to like those who give them what they want. Consequently the parent who indulges them is the one whom they "love best." The results of this are especially vicious if the indulgent parent sides with the children against the other parent. Such yielding of ground by either parent is a betrayal of both the children and the other parent. Furthermore, it protects the children from experiencing that conflict of valuings essential to growth.

To fend off from a child such conflict of valuings is one of the most irreligious things a parent can do. It allows the children to build a little world including only their likes and omitting their dislikes. They are not stimulated and challenged to explore appreciatively the values and valuings of others. They are touchy rather than sensitive. They remain infantile. They do not learn how to enter into creative interaction. Even when legally adult, they continue to hunt for a world made up of what they like, what feels good, what is easy or congenial or favoring. Most crucial of all outcomes is the fact that they have not developed the means of access to the greatest values in life.

In the meantime, the parent whose values and valuings have not been understood or appreciated is tragically excommunicated so far as his family life is concerned. This stunts his life and that of each of the children, even though the children do not miss his valuings.



## TRUSTEES OF OUR CHILDREN

"These are my children, aren't they? I guess I've got the right to do as I please with them." Often we hear such an expression. To match it comes a frequent remark of children: "Well, believe me, when I have children of my own, I'll never treat them this way." How wholly are "our children" ours? Our notion of our equity in a child shrinks the longer we look into the matter. His biological and cultural inheritance contains much more of the nature and contributions of other persons than of our individual selves. When a child reaches adolescence he becomes vociferous about the differences between himself and us. By the time he leaves home, many associates, teachers, and leaders have had a marked influence upon him. Social forces and conditions only now emerging will modify or extend his operative environment in ways beyond our power of control. Finally, he is likely to choose a mate we would never have selected for him, to go into a vocation that seems a foreign land to us, and to announce beliefs that cause turmoil within us.

In what way is a child ours? This is our question rather than how wholly he is ours. A child belongs to a parent only in the sense that the parent holds official status as the *prime social agent* for this particular child. As such, he is responsible for providing the *individualized* conditions of growth whereby the rudimental infant can mature progressively into an integrated, gladsome person. The child's world is largely the-world-as-his-particular-parents-have-experienced-it. He is guided by *their* appraisals of values, secular and religious. No two parents are alike. The values and valuing of each differ from those of the other. No one parent is the same

very long. His values and valuings are always changing. That is, they are if he is really alive. Hence, no two children ever have exactly the same parents.

Some married people assert that they will not have children: "It is too great a responsibility in such days as these." They are afraid to become trustees. Now, if being a cultural trustee for a child meant that each parent would have to choose specifically every plan, idea, and ideal for the development of his child, no thinking person would ever dare become a parent. No one is wise enough to undertake "to mold" the nature of a child, or even to mold his environment. Our job is not to make the blueprint for his life and then build his character accordingly. Our job is to provide the conditions so that he can grow to the full stature of his unique self, the like of which the world has never before seen.

Mary P. Follett has given us a vivid picture of what is involved. She relates how she went into her pasture one spring day. There she found a little plant that *looked interesting*. She did not know at all what it was or what it might become—vine, tree, frail annual, shrub, or riotous weed. She realized that she could do nothing to the plant itself. She must keep her hands off it. But she could and did help. She provided conditions for growth. She tore out the crowding weeds; she broke the soil, watered, and enriched it. She guarded it from those animals who see plants only as food.

Miss Follett did not list the things she did not do, but every one of us can, with a rueful smile, contribute to such a list from our own mistaken efforts. The growing nature of the plant is full of mystery. The growing nature of any one particular child is infinitely more full of mystery. No two children are ever alike. Each is developing his own unique combination

of potentialities in his own unique environment. Growth is a wondrous thing. Man cannot make it. It is divine. We parents must try to understand it and serve it. We must be reverent toward it. We must commit ourselves to providing such conditions that fullness of growth can take place. We must keep our ideas, plans, and ideals subject to it. This takes great faith on the part of parents, faith that the Creativity of life will develop the full personality of the child if we but provide the conditions required by creative interaction.

To be an appreciative parent, then, means to watch intelligently and reverently the growth of the child while providing and improving the conditions which promote his growth. On the one hand, we must never try "to shape" the child, "to mold" his personality, or "to build" his character. To do so is certain to issue in a serious amount of stunting, perversion, or maladjustment. On the other hand, we dare not stand back with a complacent smile while he "unfolds."

But with all our devotion, our dealings are never directly with the child. He grows. We cannot make growth. We can only provide the conditions. The basic condition which undergirds and ramifies all other required conditions is participating membership in a group where there is appreciative interaction between the values of the child and the valuings of all the members. Beyond this, if growth is to issue in a maturity full of quality and meaning, the parents in the family must not allow any one value, however great, to be as important in the conduct of family life as is God, the Source of all values.

What are some of the specific conditions, which we as parents can provide, which initiate and intensify creative interaction? Only a few of the possible many may be mentioned here, and only one or two concrete suggestions given for each.

## TRUSTEES OF THE CONDITIONS OF GROWTH

*The making of plans may be conducted by the family in such a way as to yield new values and valuing.*

For one thing, the family, while dealing with certain problems, may be conducted as a council (whether or not so called). Before any decisions or plans or programs are made involving these problems, a council meeting is held wherein the values and valuing of each member pertinent to the situation in question are appreciatively presented and understood. Usually this involves a conflict of valuing in the form of a creative discussion.<sup>6</sup> Decision cannot be made by majority vote—the members being too unequally qualified. Furthermore, agreement tends toward apathy or complacency. First, *all* valuing receive considerate hearing. Second, the group feels its way into some plan which seems worth trying out, knowing they can modify it as new insights come. Interaction creates family community.

*Regular occasions for experiencing the community of the family may be arranged.*

One current form is Family Night. In this case, the family reserves an evening or an hour or so after dinner on one certain night each week for family interests and fun. Everyone tries to be his most interesting and attractive self in order to contribute his best to the family good time. The members may entertain each other or play games or sing together, or have a family picnic. Another current form is the reserving of the hour or half hour immediately following dinner each day for a Family Hour, all the family whisking the dishes through so that everyone may participate from the start.

The genial atmosphere of such occasions tends to break down

incipient resistances, prejudices, hurts, moodiness, misunderstandings, and other hindrances to free self-expression. It encourages release of the potentialities of every member.

*The entering of a new undertaking can transform and enrich the community of the family.*

For example, the coming of a new baby can refocus the attention of all the members of the family upon providing the conditions of growth for one who is starting life. There are many things new to do and to appreciate. The whole family are coerced to develop into a closer knit organic whole wherein each co-operates with the others in new relations. The one who was youngest is no longer so. Common possessions must be differently divided. Future plans must be differently developed. There must be a reordering all through. Furthermore, new elements are forcing personal transformations. The more members there are in the family, the more must each re-evaluate his previous values and valuing. Even the baby has his own way with things and people!

*Person-to-person relations can be cultivated into richer growth.*

Both parents may reserve a minimum of ten minutes or so per day for person-to-person relations with *each* child. The time must be well chosen so that both parent and child can give himself over wholeheartedly to the chat or walk or game or whatever form the creative interaction takes. No discussion of the routine of family business or of some specific misbehavior should be permitted to intrude upon this priceless "hour." This period may come at various times during the day, such as when riding downtown with daddy or rushing in to chat with mother when first home from school. When-

ever it comes it can be a precious experience, precious because pregnant with value.

*Parents may help the children to a fairer estimate of the values and valuings of older persons.*

Children soon learn that parents are likely to have something disagreeable to say or to request them to do whenever the parents call them. Frequently when the children answer they run into an irksome task to be performed or a scolding for one not performed. I had to deal vigorously with myself in this particular at one stage in my parenthood. Aroused by the clever maneuverings of my children to avoid being reached by my callings, I checked my calls and was aghast at their lack of attractiveness and of value from the child's point of view. I set out to train myself to call my children at least once for something which would obviously increase the quality and meaning of life *for them* for every call which would seem to them to be only a disciplinary or managerial call. The change in sense of fellowship and spontaneity of expressiveness on their part was marvelous.

*Opening up new areas of interest to sharing by the whole family.*

The daily sharing of reading and of comment on current events, for instance, is quite clearly a great opportunity for interaction between values and valuings.

These specific conditions here sketched illustrate only a few of the countless possibilities. The chapters to follow will discuss certain others in detail.

## TESTING OUR TRUSTEESHIP

The first reaction of parents to this challenge to provide adequate conditions for creative interaction within the family may run like this: "Well, it sounds all right, but it is impracticable. It would take too much time."

This objection needs thinking through. First, is not the main business in life for parents that of providing the conditions of growth for their family? Earning the living and managing the household are exceedingly important, but they are only the chores of life. They, in themselves, do not produce vital values but rather provide some of the instruments required for the growth of vital values. It is easy for us parents to get lost here and wake up to find ourselves making these chores our ruling concern.

Second, personality and culture grow only where there is creative interaction. Consequently, when we say that we have no time to do what is required to promote interaction of values we are saying that we have no time for the kind of living that truly counts.

Lastly, such provision of conditions actually takes less time *in toto*. More investment of time *is* required at the start, but much, much less as the children grow older. This is true because, first, in the various members of our families there occurs less maladjustment of the nonconstructive sort to drain our time and energy; second, the children sooner reach the place where they have committed themselves to something they feel is great and so are not slavishly subject either to current crazes or to depersonalizing group pressures.

This is illustrated in a minor way even in the plant world.

A tree well started takes less care than one neglected, for it develops within itself some considerable means of resistance to diseases and occasional drought. Consequently, our concern for time turns out to be a matter of deciding upon our preference between spending most of our time on the early constructive provision of the conditions of growth or on later corrective dealing with the disruptive results of early neglect.

#### SIGNS OF GROWTH

What are some of the outward signs whereby we may know that creative interaction is occurring on a reasonably adequate basis in our families?

The individual members of the family show more freedom and spontaneity of self-expression and are hampered by fewer frustrating inhibitions.

The valuing of members of the family are becoming more closely patterned by reality. The members are increasingly honest and trustworthy. They do not need illusions or fictions as crutches.

The members of the family are acquiring the skills required for a higher level of creative interaction, such as a working understanding of group procedures, larger and more accurate vocabulary, techniques for dealing with conflicts without experiencing negative fear, the scientific method of problem solving, and tact in making approaches to persons and groups.

The interests of the members of the family are becoming more diverse while still becoming more mutually supporting.

The members are having the fullest and widest experience of the things which words designate (*a*) within the scope of the ability of each and (*b*) within the bounds of safety. This may be expressed in another way: each is experiencing increase in the quality and meaning of life to the limits possible to him at the time.



The appreciative consciousness of the members is increasing so that they are sensitive and responsive to a wider range and deeper degree of reality. They are finding themselves more and more at home farther and farther from their original home.

The organization and arrangement of the home are becoming increasingly conducive to creative interaction so that it occurs more easily, more frequently and more effectively.

There is increase in soundness and power of discrimination in regard to values. Because of this, the members show a progression in the worth of what they have successively chosen as their ruling concern. Further, they show far more zest since they are devoting themselves to values they actually believe in. Hence they need less corrective discipline. Their sense of value and their devotion to what they consider of greatest value are increasingly directive over their living.

Members take keener delight in occasions marked by greater creativeness in family interaction, such as the dinner hour, Family Council, and special family projects and celebrations. They hunger for these increases of the quality and meaning in life which such interaction brings. Mutual appreciation and reinforcement mount. So family unity and community deepen.

As the members mature, there is a turning away from devotion to specific values and an intensifying of devotion to creative interaction which is the immediate source of all vital values. The family becomes more consciously God-centered.

#### THE TRUSTEES OF THE FAMILY UNIT

If the parents are to serve as effective trustees of their particular family, the appropriate institutions of the community must operate effectively as trustees of the family as a whole. Chief among these institutions are the school, the government, and the church. Each has its own responsibilities toward the

family, too complicated to discuss here. But it will be well to cite enough of these to put the individual family into the community setting of a family of families.

The trusteeship of the school for the family involves a close co-operation of its educative efforts with those of the family, and adequate facilities for family education and guidance. The trusteeship of the government involves that plastic, co-operative type of organization of the major interests of society which prevents competition or conflict between these from becoming the sort which brings calamity to the family. It also requires the maintenance of such conditions of living in each community as promote health, security, communication, and constructiveness. The trusteeship of the church involves the provision of that kind of fellowship which nurtures the religious growth of the heads of families as these latter must provide for their children in their own homes. Further, it must work with the parents *in the home*, guiding *their* efforts in religious nurture. Again, it must provide such opportunities for co-operative re-evaluation of experiences as will lead the devotions of parents and children gradually to God.

Because our country is committed to the democratic way of living and since parents form the major part of the constituency of each community, individual families can increase immeasurably the adequacy of the trusteeships of community institutions for the family by bringing the right sort of pressures to bear. Such pressures must grow out of sincere study of the situation and must be based upon a desire to build more fair and mutually supportive relations between all institutions and interests. This is to say, the community of families depends for its growth upon the creative interaction between all the interests and institutions of which it is composed just as much as

does the individual family upon the interaction between values and valuings of all its several members. If culture is to grow in a community, families as families must provide the conditions for creative interaction between each other. This is the real purpose of the institutions of the community.

## Chapter VI

### GROWING APPRECIATION

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The Hart family have been at their beach cottage just long enough to change their clothes and do the necessary chores required to get things into running order. Now everyone is free to do as he pleases for the afternoon. The two little children rush for the sand with spades and buckets. Jack is off down the beach a mile to see what a crowd of people is excited about. Sally has gone over to a neighbor's house to join the bunch of high school girls gathered there. Gordon is in the attic, adding two rare specimens to his insect collection. Mrs. Hart has looked at the bit of garden, greeted the neighbors, and is learning of the community plans for the next two weeks. Professor Hart is deep in a book on the present political situation, a book he has been trying to get at for a month. Grandmother is listening to an inspirational program on the radio. Each member of the family is experiencing satisfaction. No one of them would want to trade interests with any other one. Indeed, he cannot, for his interests are a part of his very self. What he appreciates claims him. What holds his attention makes up his world.

It doesn't make any difference how full this universe is of marvels. The only parts we can make ours are those we can appreciate. Consequently, our growth of appreciation is of great importance. There are three odd facts about appreciation. First, we can experience values many times without knowing

either what they are or even that they are present. The trouble with not knowing of the existence and nature of some value is that we cannot then do anything to maintain it or increase the growth of it.

Second, we can know a great deal *about* values yet miss entirely the experiencing of them. The trouble with not *feeling* the value is that we then lack the most potent drive to work for this value, and for the increase of it.

Third, once we have had a convincing taste of a value, it has a hold on us. Its appearance in a situation is bound to affect our behavior. We can put this more strongly: everything we do, all our behavior, is an effort on our part to bring ourselves into better adjustment to what *we* experience as of value.

What a vast difference there is between the appreciable worlds of a wise old person, of a young parent, and of an infant! All the arguments and lectures and memory verses in the world could never make the appreciable world of the baby into that of the young parent, nor could they make that of the parent into that of the ripe, old person.

Appreciation does not come by wishing, impatient scolding, or sarcastic prodding. It comes only by growing. Our appreciable world grows to the extent that our own appreciative consciousness grows. Of this we can be certain, our appreciative consciousness does grow, whether or not it is given understanding cultivation. Nevertheless, the better the cultivation the better the growth.

#### THE GROWTH OF APPRECIATION

First, let us trace through briefly the course of the growth of appreciation. Then later we shall want to distinguish the procedures by which this growth can best be promoted.

The child starts out in life under the mastering control of

bodily appetites. Nothing is so important as the satisfaction of these. Now, of course, our bodily appetites continue to exert some control over our living to the end of our days. But the critical point in determining the degree of growth of appreciation appears when we ask, "Are our bodily appetites, all or any one of them, given the place of first importance in our living?" If the answer is *yes*, then we are infants, culturally speaking, no matter whether our years number two, or twenty-two, or sixty-two.

But every child who lives with parents who have themselves grown beyond cultural infancy develops away from this stage where he is under the dominance of bodily appetites. He grows into the second period, where a succession of specific values controls him. These values are of many sorts, trivial or great, concrete or ideational—an electric train or velocipede, a secret club or a chum, a place on the team or the first prize, becoming popular or getting a certain job, improving school spirit or correcting some great social injustice. The younger the child, the more tangible, immediate, and fleshly values must be if they are to be appealing. Also this small person confuses values with things, believing that so long as certain things are within his reach he has what he wants. For instance, he comes to feel that a certain house is home and may become actually ill when taken from it.

The child gives his first loyalty at any one time to that something which *he* feels is of the most worth *to him*. This continues until some crisis shows up his specific value as disappointingly cheap or false or empty. The thing he has counted upon most fails him. This crisis may be relatively trivial or severe. It may be one episode or a series of shocks. It cannot injure him seriously or stunt his growth, however, if he is liv-

ing in a genuinely religious family. It will only induce a re-evaluation of the things in life that seem important to him, followed by the choice of some other specific good to which he will now give his supreme allegiance.

This progression of supreme loyalties goes on for a number of years. The individual's devotion is shifted from one value now-become-deflated to another specific objective now-alluringly-full-of-promise. Each time this happens, fresh evaluations take place.

Gradually the child develops his own table of measures. He becomes more particular about what he invests himself in. His tests for what is of value may be adequate or inadequate, false or true, but whatever they are he lives by them. His appreciations become organized into attitudes, habits, procedures, and ideals. These are his valuing, the things he goes by in all that he does and thinks and feels when interacting with other persons.

Many persons get no farther in growth than this—the giving to some one specific good or interest the supreme control over their living. Their ruling concern may be sculpture, solving a scientific problem, getting rich, starring in the movies, service to others, or raising dahlias. The specific value to which they give supreme allegiance may be a noble one and they may do much good in the world through their devotion to it. But they are bound to do evil also, as we saw in the discussion of ideals.

To allow any one "good" to monopolize us is to tangle or destroy other parts of the web of meaning which connects us with all value, actualized or still potential. It results in blocking the growth of appreciation. In time it issues in impoverishment and the destruction of old values.

There are, nevertheless, two powerful reasons for our per-

sisting tendency to make a god out of some specific "good." First, we already know and like the satisfying taste of this "good" to which we are now devoting ourselves, but we do *not* know the taste of those other values that lie ahead calling for growth of appreciation. We tend to mistrust the unknown.

Second, our living has become completely arranged with this present "good" in the dominant place. Our books, our apartment, our friendships, the children's school, our business connections—everything is "sitting pretty." Hence, to grow toward greater values would involve some scrapping of present arrangements and a reordering of our living. This disturbance of accustomed ways is irritably resisted by most of us. "If I'm satisfied, why change?"

#### CULTIVATING THE GROWTH OF APPRECIATION

##### *Some Guiding Principles*

Fortunately for our children and other associates, *we cannot impose our own values upon them*. If Mr. A is in a situation where Mr. B is the balance of power, Mr. A may have to give lip and hand service to Mr. B's values, but this does not mean that these values have a hold on him. A guest may feel compelled to go to a lecture or to play a game which means less than nothing to him; he begrudges the time and energy. A child goes through the motions of washing his hands and face not because he loves cleanliness nor because "Cleanliness is next to godliness," but because he mightily well knows he has to. But isn't he relieved on the days that mother is downtown!

*Each value must make its own way* into the living of persons. This is true of small values like spinach or a pet dog and of great values like democracy and God. Therefore, in fostering the growth of our children, we have ever to hold in mind



that our job is that of promoting the *growth of appreciation*, not that of promoting certain specific values.

We are culturists, not salesmen. Our children are quick to note when we take the wrong approach. How many times they say to us something like this, "Well, dad, you haven't sold me on that yet by a long way!" This requirement that we spend our main effort on promoting *growth of appreciation* instead of on promoting specific values is the first principle.

A second principle which must govern our efforts in cultivating appreciation is this: *We must start where the child is at the time*. However glorious a certain issue of the newspaper may be to daddy because it contains news that is deeply heartening, it is glorious to baby only because it makes such astonishingly interesting noises when it is crumpled and torn to pieces. It is going to take many steps in growth of appreciation before the newspaper-tearing baby becomes a newspaper-reading person.

Swift growth of appreciation is not based on skipping values, not on becoming superficially sophisticated. It is based on an eager, dynamic, but thorough living-through of each value in the progression of values. The more wholeheartedly we live through any one value the more quickly we discover its faults and limits. Then, when we leave it behind, there is no nostalgia or repression. The growth which resulted through it has made us capable of appreciating the new elements in the next value to which we give first place in our living.

We can see the truth of this principle clearly in a negative application. When a parent tries tenaciously to force a child to devote himself to a value he is not yet ready to appreciate, such as studying the violin, the child finally turns not only against violin playing and music, but also against the parent. The child

and parent become avowed antagonists. Until this situation is corrected, there is an impasse. The only means by which the value may find its way into the child's organism are closed for the time being. This is a fairly common occurrence during adolescence.

Such an impasse may come also between a husband and wife. Once a wife came to me complaining of the incurable stubbornness of her husband. She reported that he roared "No!" to every suggestion she made, no matter what it concerned. Study of the situation revealed the fact that the reaction-time of the husband was so much slower than that of the wife that he could not think out at a moment's notice all that might be involved in her suggestions. Consequently, he feared what he might become involved in if he gave assent. He chose the security of an instant, final "No!" which at least made him *sound* like a man of action and judgment. As was rather human, he had projected his mistrust of his own power of judgment over on his wife. He told me that he could not count on her, on what she might be "cooking up." The development of a procedure for the presentation of suggestions<sup>5</sup> (which are one form of valuings) proved of material aid in this case.

Always we must start where the individual is. *Sufficient readiness for appreciation must be developed before new values can be successfully introduced.* This is a gradual process.

#### SOME PROCEDURES

Certain procedures for promoting growth of appreciation make their chief contribution through *awakening in the child\**

\*The term *child* is used to simplify the explanations. The procedures, however, are workable at all age levels.

*awareness of an unfamiliar value*, some through *giving him a convincing taste of a new value*, and still others through *increasing his discrimination concerning an already chosen value*. Probably in any one experience, any one effective procedure makes all three types of contribution to the growth of appreciation, but some procedures seem to emphasize one aspect more than the others.

### A. Awakening Awareness

Procedure #1. Awakening awareness by putting the child in situations where he gets "the feel" of the impelling devotion back of the behavior and the achievements of certain persons.

Practical examples of this procedure may take any one of countless forms: viewing some valuable private collection, reading true accounts of courageous loyalty, visiting a certain section of a museum, an excursion to a locality where something held to be important to the community is going on, helping father put his cherished tools away.

The important thing here is not so much getting information about the values in detail as *getting the feel of the devotion* of the people toward what they cherish.

Procedure #2. Awakening awareness by having the child live as a participant member in a devoted group.

Much of our discussion so far has dealt with this procedure, the most important of all in the cultivating of appreciation. A few things need to be emphasized here, however. One is that it must be a nondeliberate procedure. We parents will fail when we try "to set an example." Our attention is then on ourselves or on the child or on his mistakes instead of on the object of our devotion. The essential thing to do in this case

is to give our wholehearted, sincere, intelligent devotion to that in which we believe.

Further, we must not try to drag the child into participation. When he has got the feel of the quality and meaning of our devotion *he will begin to ask questions*. Only then is it time for us to try to help his understanding, for only then is there the required readiness.

When he asks questions, we must try to answer them as simply and honestly as we can. Especially we must not take advantage of his early questions to pour out a suppressed flood of all the things we want him to be sure to know about the object of our devotion. If a child sees that his parents care so much for something that they will deny themselves for it, he is bound to think this something worth a tremendous lot. When he feels that way he will keep at us until he finds out what it is we think is worthy of all our doing.

### B. Giving a Convincing Taste

Procedure #3. Seeing to it that the child has *direct experiences* of the value-in-mind instead of *talk about* it. The experiences must be such as to convince him of its worth.

Family living is so arranged that the child gets deeply convincing tastes of each selected value. Thus, each value speaks for itself. However, note this: there must be no contrived habituation of a child in respect to particular points of view, ideals, or beliefs. This would bind his mind. It would stunt his growth and that of his society. His ideas, ideals, and principles must emerge progressively as precipitates of his own experiences, direct and vicarious, individual and group.

There are values, however, which can be introduced through

habituation. For instance, the family's *program* for Sunday mornings can be planned so that the child is introduced to Sunday as the most delightful day of the week or the worst day. The Sunday morning time schedule, breakfast menu, parental dispositions, family singing or other activities, kind of connections with church, all these and other details make up an order of living that gives a definite habituation in the *taste* of the value *Sunday*. It rests with the parents to determine what kind of taste their particular program is to give.

Again, through instituting the Family Council already discussed, the child can be habituated to the fun and values possible in settling differences through a special kind of activity, creative discussion. This can happen long before he has any idea of the significance of the whole process or has ever heard of the value *democratic procedure*.

Procedure #4. Encouraging the child to try out the new values under circumstances which he feels insure his safety or promise greater satisfactions, while supplying understanding guidance.

Obviously, a child *cannot* choose a value he does not appreciate. He requires a personally conducted tryout of the new value, some guided experimentation with it, and appropriate reinforcement during his new adventure until he has tasted it deeply enough to convince him that this new way is better.

These are very long steps for children—to turn from self-amusing, destructive pranks at Halloween to activities that are fun for all concerned; to exchange the satisfactions of the “spoiled child,” the bully, the show-off, or the “angel child,” for the values that come through considerate give-and-take relations with their peers and family; and to meet time-plans.

The guiding parent first studies out some effective way to

help the child take the immanent overlong step. Then he and the child, in the spirit of stirring adventure or promising experiment, develop a plan-of-action for the tryout. The parent assists skillfully during this psychic birth of the child's appreciation of sounder sources of value. Some births are protracted!

### C. Increasing Discriminative Judgment Concerning a Chosen Value

Procedure #5. By encouraging the child to live through a value as wholeheartedly as possible.

This procedure has been mentioned earlier. It is an indispensable one, although there are a few cases where it cannot be used, cases where injury of some serious sort would result. But, in general, learning more and more about a chosen value through experiences of all appropriate sorts is the best way of securing promotion to the next level of value. There are, then, no grounds for sentimentalizing, idealizing, or unwarranted love. If guided with understanding, it is a good procedure to carry children out of crushes, crazes, fads, unworthy hobbies, "smart" opinions, conceited positions, unworthy friendships, and so on.

However this living-through is carried on, whether actually or imaginatively, the child must have within himself some resources by which to appraise the outcomes of his wholehearted devotion to his chosen "good." He cannot "come to his senses" unless he has some! This means that he has already had enough convincing tastes of sound values in related areas of interest to result in a final aversion whenever the chosen value is actually unworthy.

Procedure #6. Increasing discriminating judgment by introducing the child into some situation where his chosen value is thrown into marked contrast with the chosen value of some other person or sometimes, better still, of a group.

One of the most marked experiences of this procedure comes when a little child first attends the nursery school at public or church school. But the experience can be induced many times also through inviting a particular guest into the home or through having the child go as a guest elsewhere. Again, it can come through biographical reading. The point is that the child has a specific experience of seeing himself in contrast to someone who has a different value.

This procedure might have been called "inducing a conflict of valuings," a matter we have already stressed as essential to growth. The parent who overprotects his children from such conflicts of valuings with those who are different or disagree is doing them irreparable harm. It is better that the children have a bit too strong an experience than that they somewhat lack it.

Our present social conditions, which seek to enforce almost slavish conformity concerning what is to be thought worth while, are serious barriers in the way of growth of appreciation. So are those parents who praise their children and give them whatever they ask regardless of the realities of the situation. All such factors result in stunting of personality, which in turn impedes creative interaction with other persons.

Procedure #7. Increasing discriminative judgment by encouraging the exploring or inventing attitude toward whatever is new, strange, different, uncongenial, or seemingly impossible.

This procedure is essential in supporting the previous one, as well as for general use.

The crude, childish reaction to anything different or uncongenial is well termed a *signal reaction*. This means that the untrained person reacts instantly with an expression of aversion to anything that is unfamiliar or not liked. Sometimes the individual is so infantile that he believes he can horribly punish the unliked object by showing his utter dislike for it. He kicks doors, calls strange persons and things bad names, and refuses new food without tasting it. He feels that this is the maximum level of treatment. Psychologists have a name for these individuals, no matter what their age—*spoiled children*. They have not been trained away from *signal reactions* to *exploratory* ones.

This procedure consists partly in preparing children ahead of time for any experience which has an unusually strange or unliked element, preparing them to meet it with curiosity and challenge. It consists also in living it through with them (to the extent that this is appropriate) so that they will get the *feel* that can come through companionship in adventure toward new values.

We might put it this way: they are first led to deal with those aspects of the new value which are known to them and which they can tolerate; then gradually their exploring is extended to the less well-known elements. If successful, this procedure develops *constructive organic set* toward dealings with things strange, unlikable, and awesome. It makes for courage in going beyond conformity, complacency, fixations, and those other states which are half-deaths.

We need to watch for these infantile *signal reactions* in our-



selves and our children. They are manifestations of lack of appreciative response.

#### CO-OPERATIVE EVALUATION

All the procedures just presented are shaped to one end. They are the means of bringing about a more concentrated experience of interaction between the valuing of persons and groups than everyday living automatically provides. When used to help the child, they enable him to see his own valuing (habits, interests, attitudes, ideals, and all the rest) through the eyes and experience of other persons.

Although co-operative evaluation is usually carried on through discussion, it can be done when not a word is spoken. Suppose a respected relative or the teacher of our children comes to visit the family. Do we not see things in the behavior of our children that we never saw before? No word of criticism is spoken. It is even likely that the relative or teacher thinks no criticism. But we ourselves see things through the eyes of the outsider, that is, we do if we are honest and sensitive.

When children enter a new school, this silent co-operative evaluation always goes on to some extent. If our children are not received as friends by the children of the most worth-while families, we can call the community bad names, of which it no doubt deserves some. But if we have the stamina to face reality, we see some things about the personalities of our children that we did not see before. Some of their valuing is in distressing conflict with the valuing of this new community. We must recognize the unworthy as well as the worthy.

Important consequences follow genuine creative interaction and co-operative evaluation. For one thing, the individual per-

son or group appreciates more vividly the values which exist for him right now. Consequently, he experiences more of the quality and meaning of life. Second, the individual comes to feel "at home" with the realities of life, and with an ever-increasing scope of them. Again, the individual reaches the level where he usually anticipates the unknown with far more thrill than fear. He has some sense of how Creativity works. Finally, the individual grows toward God. Progressively, he savors and serves, first, some of the lesser, next some of the greater, and then some of the greatest human values. Finally, he grows to the place where he understands the limits of all specific human goods and gives his deepest devotion not to any "highest good" as he has done heretofore, but to the Source of all value, which is the Creativity of God.

We can sum it up this way. Creative interaction develops our appreciative consciousness, on the one hand, and the appreciable order of our world, on the other.

The love-form of creative interaction is peculiarly potent in the maturing of appreciations. The conditions of living within a genuine family promote this love-form of creative interaction more effectively than any other conditions. Family life is the chief means of religious nurture. Hence, it becomes at once apparent how devastating it is to a family to have any one of its members excluded from such interaction, whether by his own self-interest, by outside circumstances, or by any other cause. Each member has unique resources for the enriching and the growth of the family. Each has his own unprecedented combination of valuings. A husband or a wife who allows himself to be preoccupied unduly, a mother who turns over much of the care of her children to others, or a father who thinks that the bringing up of the children is the mother's

affair—these are examples of neglect of the life line of the family. They involve neglect of the conditions which provide for the work of God in family life.

#### GROWING APPRECIATION OF GOD

What does all this discussion about the growth of appreciation have to do with the child's coming to appreciate God?

The growth of appreciation of human values is the essential foundation for the growth of appreciation of God. It is a progressive process, we have said. The early "first values" of the child are not within seeing distance of that First Value deemed worthy of the devotion of all men, God. Yet the way in which the child devotes himself to all those specific goods to which he gives his first loyalty during his years of growth will determine largely the way in which eventually, when he is ready for it, he will devote himself to God.

Religion has been degraded by being represented as something anyone can have, even a small child. Religion is a certain way of living. It is sufficiently difficult to sound out the very depths of us. Young children cannot be religious. For that matter, they cannot be citizens. It takes a long period of growth and guidance to develop a child into an individual rightfully called a citizen. It takes fully as long a period of growth and guidance to develop a child into a person rightfully called religious.

Children cannot live religiously until their appreciations have matured sufficiently to make *the great transition in ruling concerns from specific goods to the creative Source of all good*. This, we have said, is brought about through creative interaction. Helping the child to make this transition by way

of a sequence of loyalties to ever and ever higher goods is religious nurture.

We are not intending to say here that parents, if they are to succeed, *must* think of God as the "Creativity of life," as the "Source of all goods," and as "Creative Love." Nor, in order to promote religious growth, *must* they think of God as "best experienced at the human level through creative interaction." God is always more than any of us can comprehend. Nevertheless, *children grow into religious persons through creative participation in the living of a devoted group*, regardless of what theological terminology is used. The religion of the family is not the religion of the children but that of the parents. Devoted parents are always expressing their valuings, both intentionally and unintentionally, including their lesser valuings together with their master valuings concerning God. All the expressions of the actual valuings of the parents are the educative influences which are at work every minute of every day in the lives of their children.

*Religious nurture, then, depends not only on (1) a certain kind of interaction between members of the family, which is the work of God. It depends also on (2) the nature of the valuings of the parents, particularly of their valuing of God, and (3) the sincere, wholehearted expression by the parents of their devotion to Creativity.* The value-habits and value-ideals of all the members of the family come bumping and clashing against, or flowing and mixing with, the value-habits and value-ideals of each of them. This forces each to reappraise his values, discarding some here, modifying some there, and strengthening others. He is forced by this interaction with other persons either to find adequate reasons for that in which he believes or to change his point of view. He is forced to

develop continuously new forms of appreciative response. As time goes on, he is made aware of what all the others hold to be of first importance. He has an opportunity to observe the outcomes of their several loyalties because of his continued dealings with every member of the group. Thus he is guided ever on toward God, not by talk about God but by sharing living with those who sincerely try to put God first in all they say and feel and do.

## Chapter VII

### BUDGETING OUR RESOURCES

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One of the easiest ways to find out what we actually believe to be most important is to find out how we spend our resources. Each of us has six sorts of things in life which he may spend.

Time: days, weeks, months, years; vacations; minutes while waiting, and so on.

Energy: as expressed in interests whether these are physical, intellectual, social, spiritual, or other.

Abilities: talents; aptitudes; skills; poise; and so on.

Space: such as is within his control: walls and floor space in his own room or office; desk; drawers; shelves; closets; owned ground; seats at performances; there are many examples.

Property: tools; clothing; house; whatever one legally owns or controls.

Money: negotiable papers; cash; excess materials which can be sold or traded; and so on.

This sixth resource is different from all the others. It is worthless in itself. It can be so spent as to increase the others. With it, we can often buy materials, inventions, or services which make our own time, energy, abilities, space, or property go much further. Or it can be spent so as to decrease our resources considerably without rendering equivalent value. Examples are buying a house too large for our needs, sus-

taining a meaningless membership in an expensive club, subscription to a fat magazine with indifferent contents, and a hobby dealing with trivial things.

Most of us are so situated in life that a rather large proportion of all these resources is required for the mere continuance of life. We have no choice about this portion except to see that it is invested as wisely as possible. But after the minimum requirements for existence are met, what do we do with the rest of our resources? The answer to this reveals almost beyond doubt where our treasure is. What do we have time for? space for? money for? Upon what do we spend our energies? our abilities? What values are yielded by our properties?

#### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BUDGETING

There are occasions when we spend our resources "without thinking," that is, without evaluating. We are not deliberate traitors to those ruling concerns to which we have committed all we are and all we have. Rather, on such occasions we are not alert to the fact that our spending has important bearings, for good or ill, upon what we cherish most.

Examples of such unintentional abdication from our commitments are legion. We may write a check to contribute to the support of some group that is trying to do away with child labor and then about-face by buying goods priced so cheap that one should suspect production under inhuman conditions. Or one of us may have said to himself, "All the fellows seem to be going in strong for bridge these days, but I just can't see it for myself." Yet within a month, he finds himself all equipped and signed up for bridge once a week. He didn't decide. He drifted into it, pushed by the pressures of the neighbors.

The thrilling thing about budgeting and spending resources is that these activities *can* facilitate our access to many of those values which we feel are most worth while. Some families seem to have fallen into the false notion that a budget is an entirely disagreeable instrument which so restrains and forbids that it shuts all the joy out of living. If a budget is worked out with reasonable intelligence and appreciation, however, it serves exactly the opposite purpose. It makes possible many values not within our reach so long as our spending of resources continues to be uncontrolled.

Budgeting our time, energy, abilities, space, property, and money, then, means deciding which are the greater and which the lesser values in life to the end of limiting or excluding expenditures on the lesser so that we can have easier access to the greater. This involves sacrifice of a sort, for we do have to give up certain things. Nevertheless, there is no essential self-sacrifice in it, for we give up what we care less about in order to get what we care more about.

All this sounds like nothing more than plain good business. Business is business. Is there anything about it that needs any special attention from a family living its religion? As a matter of fact, there is probably no part of family life where the issues are more clearly drawn between religious and unreligious living than in this matter of budgeting our resources.

At the bottom of the whole matter are our *wants*. If we are physically and socially healthy and if we are living in the midst of the growing abundance of modern times, our wants are *forcing* us into interaction with others. In turn, this interaction is increasing our sensitivities and responsiveness. With this growth of appreciation come more complex wants. These larger wants drive us more unremittingly into interaction



with others. What is more, they frequently involve us in long and complicated forms of interaction, such as citizenship and marriage. Fortunately for mankind, there are these coercions of our wants that force us into creative interaction.

Now we reach the second implication in the chain. The more our wants force us into interaction with others, the more we are forced to discover and use our present resources, or to develop additional ones. We are created and re-created. But this creation is not by our wants directly, but by the interaction with others required in the fulfilling of wants. With few wants, there is little growth. But great wants bring great growth. They force us to appreciate our resources more objectively and to improve them. The kind of wants we have not only manifests the kind of persons we are, but also the kind of persons we are becoming.

Again another link. The kind of wants we have largely determines the kind of persons and groups with which we shall interact. Persons are mutually attracted by common and reciprocal wants and interests, in the form of appetites, hobbies, ideals, or great causes. So the nature and intensity of our wants determines what persons and groups shall to some extent make up our social environment. If our wants are such as to require the development and expansion of more *ability* for the kind of interaction that will satisfy them, then we shall find ourselves more and more associating with persons of ability. If they require more *money*, then we shall find ourselves dealing with moneyed persons. If our chief wants are directed toward *one narrow area of human interest*, we shall find the circle of our associates narrow and specialized. Wants direct our connections with others.

But all appreciative people have more wants than can be

satisfied. None of us has time enough or energy or space or ability enough to take care of, and make use of, all the things that we feel we want. This brings us to another link in this chain of implications. This link, too, is fortunate for mankind. We are forced to choose, to evaluate. We cannot evaluate, however, without two things: (1) appreciation of values represented in various "goods" from among which we must choose some and (2) a set of measures by which we can decide what is most worth while. *We are forced to deal with the better and the worse*, and to find out what makes some things better and others worse. We shall always make mistakes. The younger we are the more superficial and fleshly will be our choosing. The older we are the more narrow and biased will be our selection unless we have lived under the control of creative interaction.

Now, the budgeting of our resources is the practical process that brings this long, strong chain of implications to the consciousness of the parents, and gradually to the children as they mature. Actually, "Family Budgeting of our Resources" is another name for the *education of our wants and loyalties*. If we parents do not realize these deeper issues underlying the business aspects of the practical matter, we shall have missed the best of it. But whenever we do have these things in mind, the budgeting of resources becomes another area where Creativity is at work.

#### SOME GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES

1. The parents are not rightfully the lords of the exchequer, imperiously granting, refusing, or "allowing." They are the agents of values. They are the trustees of those conditions which shape wants and guide the forces which drive toward their satisfaction.

When a parent assumes the right to grant or deny requests according to his own will or whim, his children are bound many times to consider him "an old meany." Adolescents in such a situation become bitter because they feel that it is just the idiotic or mean notion of the parent which keeps him from letting them have what "everybody else has." But when the parents help the children to *feel* the values behind all that is said and done, and to see that the parents themselves are controlled by these values in budgeting and spending, the children come to realize that they are dealing with *values*, their parents being agents for the values, not dictators or misers.

2. Part of the work of parents is to provide conditions which generate and strengthen healthy wants so that the children will be forced to interact creatively with others while they earn or achieve their wants, and do so with sufficient initiative, persistence, and appreciation to bring fulfillment.

Parents have to guard against being sentimental in the matter of dealing with their children's wants. If a parent has neglected his children in some other way, he is likely to be softheaded in dealing with their spoken wants. Without realizing it he is compensating through indulgence for some previous neglect. Again, a parent may have had certain strong wants that were never satisfied and so indulges himself through indulging his children. Another common example of draining all the virility out of the wants of children is the parent whose vanity or sense of insecurity leads him to give his children everything that any other child has.

When parents make the satisfaction of wants too easy for their children or when they incite the child to want what normal development does not yet require, they actually drain

from their children the magnificent power-of-wants which otherwise would force them to try to earn the fulfillment of their own wants.

Since the appreciations of the children of indulgent parents are thereby kept immature, the children are not able to realize that their parents are essentially selfish. They call them by endearing terms in order to keep them indulgent. Often without knowing they do it, such children "work" their parents unscrupulously. Worst of all, the attention of the children is on whatever specific things they now think are good and on the parent whom they regard as the source of these "good" things which come so easily. They are learning little of creative interaction or of the true Source of all "goods."

3. The actual plans developed for the spending of time, energies, ability, money, and other resources of the family should be worked out as co-operatively as the abilities of the several members allow.

As soon as a child is old enough to realize that money will buy him something he wants he is old enough to *begin* to *feel some* responsibility in the expenditure of family resources. As soon as he is old enough to appreciate consciously how good it feels to have daddy pick him up to carry him when he is very tired he is old enough to *begin* to help take care of the energies of others.

Necessarily there are limits for the co-operative participation of children in budget making. In most families certain items on each schedule of the group of family budgets must always remain the private business of the parents. Examples of such items are provisions for special arrangements to care for some defect in one of the members, better not discussed, to care for private aspects of the husband-wife relationship, and

to care for some complicated condition which would confuse or frighten the children. Children need training in the appreciation of the values of others even where these are not known. However, aside from these specific items, the children should be acquainted with the *general* state of the family resources. It is not their fault that they grow more and more selfish if the parent is too proud or sentimental or selfish to tell them the truth and so give them one more opportunity to learn to deal with reality. If a parent lets them spend money lavishly on dates, trips, equipment, or eating at expensive places without telling them that the family is scraping along buying secondhand suits, working too hard, and using up every penny of savings, the parent is seriously injuring his children. Such children manifest the outcome in social maladjustment.

A neighbor reported indignantly the case of a family where her daughter had visited. The parents of this family had sent written orders to all their children not to come home again to visit unless they had corresponded about it first and received an invitation. My neighbor asked, "Did you ever hear of such an inhuman mother and father? And the children are all their own, too!"

This spectacular story aroused my suspicion. I found that the parents had been very indulgent with the children during their early years at home. They had struggled and scrimped, but had never realized that they were actually deceiving the children and cheating them out of growth in appreciation by not telling them the true state of the family resources.

As it happened, the children during their early years had had associates who were brought up to be considerate. So there had been no revealing catastrophes. But when these young people went away to school they had joined a crowd that

thought it was the height of fun to be sophisticatedly nonchalant and cheeky. One of their pet diversions consisted in descending upon someone's home with no concern as to what effect this might have on the plans or condition of the members of the family. It was their way to make whatever use of the furniture they pleased, raid the icebox without invitation, borrow books without permission and otherwise maraud. If they did not happen to like the entertainment provided by the host and hostess, they would show their boredom even to the point of refusing to participate. In such cases they entertained themselves, sometimes by splitting up into petting parties, sometimes by sauntering out of the house for a while. It never seemed to occur to them that they were imposing. In fact, they were complacently satisfied with themselves. In our terms, they were infants from the point of view of growth of appreciation. In everyday language, they were crude and uncouth.

In this family the mother was undergoing a period of near-illness. The father had written the children of the mother's lowered vitality. Notwithstanding, they with their uncivilized horde descended upon the family just the same. They did so without any effort to adjust their activities to the resources of the family, whether of energy, of money, of time, or of other items. Remonstrance only brought sophisticated wisecracking.

No one who has had his home invaded by such a rabble can blame the parents for their edict. Issuing the edict was not their mistake. That had occurred long before when they had failed to let the children know the limitations of the real conditions and so take their share in carrying the loads, as well as in enjoying the benefits, of the family. There had been practically no training in creative interaction. What else could the adult-children show but their extreme emotional immaturity?

The worst of it is that the creative interaction necessary to bring about growth is not so easily accessible to legally adult young people. They do not recognize or understand the foundations for enriching human relations. It is not the things that children are given that make their social life rich, but rather their ability to participate in creative interaction and the quality of personality that grows out of such participation.

#### CREATIVE BUDGETING

We cannot here discuss the mechanics of making the group of budgets needed in every family, a budget each for time, for energy, for money, and so on. This is a big subject in itself. I am developing it in another book for parents. But there are certain facts and principles that we need to hold in mind while working out budgets if we are to get the most value for the family out of its resources.

First of all, each family is unique, and every member of each family is unique. Consequently, a standardized form of budget can be used only as a general guide, never as an adequate, ready-made tool. As we have pointed out, the several budgets are a means, worked out co-operatively by the whole family, of creating and re-creating wants and loyalties. Therefore, a study of the specific family is necessary before an effective group of budgets can be developed. Furthermore, the family is changing and growing; the budgets must change too.

Since the family has several types of resources, it needs several budgets. The group of budgets must include all those needed to direct family living toward that which counts most. The *financial* budget is by far the most usual one. Yet there are times when the *energy* budget is decidedly more impor-

tant. Or again, circumstances may focus attention for a time upon the *space* budget by which the family plans and allocates all the space available for its use. Many of the problems of family maladjustment that have been brought to me have been instigated by inadequate or exasperating space arrangements in the home. The vicissitudes of our present social and economic situation make the budgeting of the *abilities* of both husband and wife peculiarly important, and as peculiarly difficult in many cases. An effective *energy* budget markedly affects the *financial* budget. In fact, each budget supports and augments the others to the extent that they are true to the realities of the situation and to the values sought.

We might summarize in this way. Working out a budget co-operatively induces an interaction of valuings among the members of the family in regard to the particular resource being budgeted. The budget itself is the formulation of the communal consensus of valuings which emerges out of this interaction. As the family lives by its several budgets, the valuings it formulates are tested in experience. Irritations, difficulties, and frustrations indicate that the budget is inadequate or outgrown. This leads to further creative interaction with re-creation of valuings, and with the formulation of a new budget.

So far our discussion of creative budgeting has been focused upon the situation within the family. But this is only half the matter. The budgeting of the family is creative outside the family also. Whenever the family spends money, energy, or any other resource it tends to further the continuance or increase of whatever it spends its resources on. We serve certain values and causes whether we know it or not. Indeed, we may



be serving evils and not know it. If we as religious people have committed ourselves to the growth of good in the world, spending resources must mean more than making sure of a fair deal for all the parties. We must seek to know just what important goods or evils we are promoting by our spending of resources.

Here are some things to think about before we buy. They are important enough to carry into our family worship. Whenever we buy a ticket to a show or game or entertainment, we are voting for a continuance of the goods or evils involved in the performance and in the conditions that produced it. Whenever we pledge our time and ability to a committee or movement, we are serving the values it stands for, and neglecting many, many other values. Whenever we buy a book, we are voting for the production of that type of book and paying for our vote. The books we do not buy are messages to the authors and publishers that we do not value them highly, if at all. Incidentally, one of the finest contributions a family can make to the production of good literature is to buy a good book carefully and regularly. There is hardly a family that could not buy at least one book a week, for there are good books to be obtained now for as little as ten cents, and many available at twenty-five cents and a dollar. What we have said about voting for books can be appropriately applied to other things—tools, equipment, sports, inventions, good times, foods, clothing, and all the rest. What tremendous opportunities creative budgeting affords for creative interaction between the members of the family! What a tremendous power we as consumers have to participate in the creating and re-creating of our community, nation, and world!

## INTRODUCING OUTSIDE RESOURCES

Fortunately for the growth of the family, few families can be entirely self-contained in these modern days. Some have more resources at their private command than do others, but almost all must interact with the community to secure a substantial proportion of the values that count with them. One or more members of the family must go out into the world to earn the money needed by the family. Through the interaction of the valuings of its various citizens, the community builds up a public school system, a public library, health service, police service, a sanitary service, a system of streets, highways, railways and other means of transportation, and so on and on. More values are available to most of us in the parks, art galleries, public concerts and lectures, information bureaus, and other civic arrangements than we ever use to the full.

There are several important aspects of these co-operatively owned resources which we should keep in mind. First, if these public resources are to represent the most value possible for the members of the community, their choice and care should grow out of the creative interaction of the citizens. If they do not, they are likely to be mere wasteful nuisances or evils, and the public is likely to deface or destroy them.

Second, we parents should know more about the public resources so that we can make better use of them in augmenting our private resources. Especially should those families which are going through some period of severe deprivation explore the public resources.

Lastly, we parents must work for the preservation and increase of our co-operatively owned community resources where these are threatened by commercial intrusion. How did the

motion picture palaces and the elaborate dance halls and taverns get built? By our money, of course, in the form of tickets and admissions. This is not to say that we should not have commercially supported entertainment. We want it when it is of the right sort, but in the meantime most parents bemoan the fact that there are certain values to which they cannot give their children access. True, one or two families striving alone cannot, but a large group of families can interact so co-operatively as to be able to do so. We have some examples of success in this undertaking—really good neighborhood play schools for tiny children, community recreation centers here and there for young people, and night schools for those employed. But we can have more. We can have just what we want if we will keep at it in the right way. The right way, we believe, is through (1) co-operation in community projects and (2) the interaction of valuings between families which develops our sense of what our own community should be.

Fine community spirit, as well as fine co-operatively owned "goods," develops through such a process. If each *community* could become what it is supposed to be, *a family of families interacting creatively for the growth of good in the community*, our problems of delinquency, sexual evils, hoodlumism, and false sophistication would be substantially reduced. Our young people would themselves get caught up into the creative community and would be participant builders.

Two questions frequently arise in regard to family use of the resources of the church: "I never get anything out of going to our church, so why should I go?" and "Shall I send my children to Sunday school?" These questions furnish substance for a long and profitable discussion. But here we shall limit our answer to three comments.

First, everyone in the community does get something out of the local churches, even if he does not attend. Every church that is functioning at all is bettering the community. Real estate men and chambers of commerce know this, as do the police force and the council of social agencies. The particular local church may be weak and faulty, but it is influencing to some extent the conditions of living in the community.

Second, the church is the one institution whose avowed function it is to point mankind to the Source of all value, to God. Amidst all the myriad offerings of a swiftly changing society, the church unceasingly calls attention to the Creativity which is operative for good in the midst of these changes.

Children need to be introduced to this prime community function of the church. They need to realize that the church-at-large has stood for something tremendous all through its history, however mistakenly it may have expressed its loyalties. When children ask, "Why do I have to go to Sunday school?" we must answer honestly. We can tell them something of what the church has stood for and does stand for, helping them to see the need of an institution that everlastingly stands for God.

*But we go with them.* This is important. We cannot tell them what the church stands for unless our own behavior supports our statement. If we believe that the church stands for the greatest good, our children will see us devoting ourselves generously to it. For instance, when a parent hands a child a penny to take to Sunday school, the child is given one concrete measure of what the parent thinks of the Sunday school, especially if this same parent gives him from fifteen cents to a dollar for movies or other amusements during the same week. While the practice of tithing is too arbitrary, some regular con-

tribution to the church, proportionate to the financial resources of the family, is advisable where possible. Time, energy, and abilities may also be given, or space and property shared. Such giving should be a matter of whole-family valuing as soon as the children are old enough to participate with understanding.

Third, that creative community which perpetuates the work of Christ, the church-within-the-church, is a "fellowship of the mystery," a fellowship where all members interact creatively through the love and grace of God. It is a family of families. It is a community of valuings. This creative community may or may not be present in any local church at any one time. It is never identical with the bare social institution. But wherever it does exist, regardless of the diverse interests which otherwise occupy us, we *can*, through it, come into the fellowship which creates and re-creates us and the community.

#### MEASURING OUR RESOURCES

We can see now how to appraise our resources. None is good or bad in itself. Each is "good" in so far as we can use it to provide the conditions so that creative interaction can operate more freely and richly. Budgeting of our resources means the consecration of them to the great, to the greater, and to That Greatest, which is God. When this family activity is carried on co-operatively, every member can feel in every part of the undertaking the spirit of for-the-sake-of. Because budgeting deals with the more concrete and tangible interests of the family, it may turn out that through co-operative budgeting we most vividly realize our part in the creative process—that of providing the conditions for it. Realizing this makes the budgeting of our resources a worshipful undertaking.

## Chapter VIII

### BALANCING FREEDOM AND DISCIPLINE

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The Graham family had just risen from dinner. Twelve-year-old Ralph had discovered by the trial-and-error method that the time right after dinner was likely to be a propitious one for making requests. Usually at this time a glow emanating from refreshed bodies and reinforced affections pervaded the atmosphere. Also the adults had not yet got busy at anything and so were not likely to be irritated by an interruption.

On this particular Tuesday night, the eve of the middle day in the school week, Ralph had his best feelers out trying to detect whether or not there was favoring weather for requests. He wanted something very much.

"Dad, can I go to Philip's house tomorrow after school and stay all night with him? A guy is going to be there who knows an awful lot about gliders." Ralph paused. He saw that his father was not working on any decision. He turned on the pressure. "Maybe I'll never get a chance at this guy again if I can't go tomorrow, dad."

"What night is tomorrow night, Ralph?" asked Mr. Graham.

Ralph could see that this time his father was not taking upon himself the responsibility of deciding. He was referring Ralph to the values that were involved in the request. He felt his hope of going to Philip's evaporating. Whenever his father assumed the authority for making a decision about a request,

arguing might do some good. But when his father put him under the authority of some value they had talked a lot about, "the jig was up. You can't argue with values." The whole family had had a big discussion of the values connected with "school nights" this past fall, as they had had every fall. There had been a co-operative agreement about the program for school nights. He had made it as much as anybody. He was aware of these values.

"But, dad, this guy doesn't live around here. He's come from back east. Maybe Philip and I'll get the first prize for our glider if we have a chance to talk to him."

"What night is tomorrow night, Ralph?" There was not the slightest tone of authority or reproof in his father's voice. Father was not weakening. He was leaving the communal valuing about school nights in the seat of power.

Ralph was disappointed, of course. He would have "got a big kick" out of staying overnight with Philip. So it is not strange that he stubbed his toes pretty hard against the steps on his way to the telephone. But his picturesque answer to Philip revealed the inner conviction concerning the ruling value that had been there all the time.

"Say, kid," Ralph called. "I can't come over tomorrow. I haven't got a chance in a carload."

#### AUTHORITY IN THE FAMILY

If softheaded sentimentality instead of intelligent, loyal sentiment had characterized Mr. Graham, he would have ended the above episode by saying, "Well, after all, what does one school night matter? They're young only once. Why be so serious-minded about so small a matter?"

It is true that one school night in and of itself makes little

difference. But this is not the chief value involved. First of all, the community of the family had made a communal valuing (decision, standard, policy, or other) to which each had freely pledged his support. When a parent "steps over the head of" a communal valuing he at once decreases the meaning and authority of all communal valuing. What is far more serious, he depreciates the process of creative interaction out of which the communal valuing arise. There can be no more serious tragedy from the point of view of the growth of the members and of the family as a whole.

To be sure, there will occur times when exception must be made to the complete authority of any one communal valuing. Two types of such occasions may arise. In one type *extraordinary* new factors appear in the situation and require temporary revision. In the other type the consequences resulting from the communal valuing demonstrate repeatedly that the valuing is seriously faulty.

Ralph's request involved neither type of occasion. While it is true that this particular "guy" might not have come into the neighborhood again, the importance of this matter is on a par with the many factors that arise over and over again during every school year. Each matter presents some genuine values which plead for an exception. But in the great majority of instances these values are relatively small, however great they may seem at the moment.

Unless the occasion calling for change in the established communal valuing comes in the form of an urgent emergency which demands that the parents become dictators during the emergency, the revision of a communal valuing should be brought about by the interaction of valuing among all the members of the family.



One of the worst aspects of the assumption of absolute authority by the parents is the effect this has on the interaction of their valuings with those of their children. In such a case, the word of the parent may not be questioned or criticized, directly or indirectly. The children then are left with the choice of being conformers, rebels, or deceivers. The quality and meaning of life are almost lacking, and growth is substantially retarded.

Acting as the final authority, then, is too big an undertaking for any mere human being.

Parents are in command only in the sense that they are the official inquirers who bring to light the conditions and demands and expressions of creative interaction. They are the agents of values and principles. They must not take the position of absolute authority in the sense of originating rules, principles, edicts, and the like. They supply the vocalizations of the requirements and try to provide the necessary conditions so that full and free and honest interaction of values can go on. Devoted parents are mouthpieces of God living in the midst of the family. They will not always correctly interpret the requirements of God, but they seek to do so.

Does this mean that creative interaction between parents and children is *always* the way to supply the authority needed in the family?

These questions point to three situations where communal values are inadequate or impossible. First, an urgent emergency. Second, a situation beyond the understanding of the children. Third, a situation wherein the children are helpless, as during infancy, illness, or incapacitation.

In the first one, there is little or no opportunity for creative interaction. In the second and third situations, the creative in-

teraction goes on between the parents themselves, and then between them and other appropriate persons or institutions—physicians, teachers, policemen, pastors, and so on. Whenever children are helpless, we parents must speak “with authority,” firmly and clearly though usually pleasantly. But the real authority in our speaking is Something Greater than we are.

#### DEVELOPING SELF-DISCIPLINE

Training in self-discipline is primarily training in value-sense. Each human being strives by behavior to achieve a better connection with what *he* values. The less mature he is the more he values what affects his own comfort, advantage, and pleasure. We call this selfishness. With growth he values what affects others as well as himself. As soon as he is able to sense and appreciate vividly the important values involved in a situation, he has proved himself capable of self-discipline in that type of situation. He can be trusted even though it involves what others value as well as what he values.

The values which induce self-discipline can be of several types. They may be *self-indulgent*. In that case, the individual controls his self-indulgence in regard to some lesser delight, perhaps lying in bed in the morning, in order to increase his self-indulgence of some greater delight, perhaps eating uncounted pancakes, dripping with unmeasured butter and unlimited syrup. Or, the values may be *self-promotive*, as when a man sacrifices his real friendships for connections that will advance his position in business. Again, the values may be *moral* in the sense that the individual wants to do his part in and for society. Finally, the values may be *religious*. They are those qualities and meanings by which the individual keeps himself under the control of the Creativity of God.

In the first two cases, the self-discipline is genuine though of low significance, the individual controls himself for the sake of himself. Some of these types of self-discipline are necessary in every life, but the significance is low because it does not promote creative interaction with others. The moral type is correspondingly much higher. But the strain on the individual is much greater here than in any other type. He must keep himself informed about all pertinent codes and laws, and he must forever be ready to meet his obligations. In the case of religious values, the self-discipline is centered in allowing his life to be transformed by controls emerging out of creative interaction. At its higher levels this religious self-discipline may require the relinquishment of precious goods. But since one's commitment is to the Source of all value, the vivifying of his sense of God renders this self-discipline tolerable, sometimes even the source of relief or joy.

We have already presented a number of techniques<sup>9, 10, 11, 12</sup> whereby the child can be sensitized to values,\* but it is well to emphasize that the democratic organization of the family is foundational to all of them. The way of living must be democratic in two senses. First, it must provide conditions and opportunities so that the uniqueness of all the members will develop and express itself. Not only each member of the family but also each relationship within the family is unique and irreplaceable. Consequently, the family must "love into being, must worship into being," the unique self of each member.

Because of all this, the way of living of the family must be democratic in a second sense. The conditions for the conduct

\* See Chap. VI also.

of life must be so arranged that each member participates up to the limit of his capacities in all the family interests. This will arouse first his attention only, next his interest, then, when he has really tasted the values involved, his responsiveness. Once he responds voluntarily he will assume his part in the responsibility. Each member is motivated by concern for the common good only to the extent that his appreciation and understanding have been heightened and deepened by meaningful participation in the ongoing and renewal and enrichment of the family community. But to this extent he has become loyal, responsible, and enthusiastic, not on the conforming level, but on the intelligently co-operative and creative level.

In these two aspects of the democratic way, we find the balance between freedom and discipline. To be free means being able to do what you want to do when your wants are directed by the best in yourself to the best in the situation. Freedom is found in that community, which generates in its members those impulses which enrich the community—not necessarily please the community, but enrich it. Freedom exists where the control springs out of the creative interaction of the community. Bondage exists where the control is superimposed on the community. Freedom is one of the most precious values to be found in community. We find freedom in those situations where our wants are controlled by that Creativity which works with us and upon us through creative interaction.

The whole purpose of discipline, whether of parents or of the self, is so to shape the conditions of one's living that his wants shall be brought more fully under the control of Creativity. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

## DEALING WITH MISBEHAVIOR

In one sense there is no such thing as misbehavior. Every individual in all that he does is always trying to put himself into better relation with what *he* considers good. He may be mistaken both as to the best way to secure the value he is seeking and as to the worthiness of the value selected. But he is always in quest of the best in terms of his total organic disposition. This is true of all of us all the time. Also, all of us are to some extent miscreating all the time, for we continue to make errors, some old and some new.

The only way the miscreant can develop the insight which will show him his errors is through creative interaction with others. Through this process the Creativity of life can speak to him. For this reason it is disastrous when any individual is shut off for long from creative interaction with others. Many things can shut him off—his own pigheadedness, the ossification of the viewpoints of those about him, excess of preoccupation, infantilism, marked difference in cultural background, an overcrowded schedule, and either a parent or a mate who fends off all valuing of others which might be disagreeable or painful. However it comes about, the shut-off individual is like a plant which, kept stripped of every leaf, has no way to interact with sun and dew, temperature and air. He cannot grow. He cannot know the truth. He is not free.

But now, looking at misbehavior from the point of view of the community of the family, there can be no doubt of its existence. In fact, sometimes it seems to us parents that on some days there is nothing but misbehavior! An honest analysis of such days is not advised, however, for those of us who want ease and peace at any cost. For as surely as day follows night,

misbehavior follows our neglect of some of the conditions necessary to full, balanced, integrated growth. Or rather I should say, *somebody's* neglect. Usually it is ours, conscience prompts us to admit. But there are many times when the neglect is that of some neighbor, relative, teacher, leader, or other supposedly responsible person.

Misbehavior, then, is a blessing in disguise. It is a manifestation that some necessary condition of growth is inadequate, lacking, or downright wrong. We can be glad that our ignorance of some neglect somewhere was not allowed to go on longer and induce more serious results. It is necessary, of course, to treat the specific incident of misbehavior. But it is far more necessary to put the conditions of growth and of living into better order. Therefore, when we undertake to deal with a specific problem in misbehavior we have two types of treatment to carry out—treatment bearing on the immediate situation, and treatment bearing on the conditions which have induced the misbehavior. This latter is the radical treatment. I give you warning ahead of time: it always includes some treatment of ourselves as parents. Let us look at a possible situation.

Tony has slapped the neighbor's child hard. This may be repayment for an attack by this child on him. It may be an effort to establish his power over the child. It may be that the child got in his way when he was playing. It may be the passing on of a cut Tony received at home that morning when the whole family gave its attention to the baby and would not listen to him. The slapping itself is of relatively little importance. What we want to know is this: What good did Tony think he would get through slapping and why did he choose

this road to his "good"? Not only do we want to know these matters, but we want to help *him* understand them.

The late Professor Rugh suggested an outline to guide our interaction with the miscreant child, which I am adapting to our use here. It is a series of questions to foster co-operative evaluation.

1. "Tell me, Tony, exactly *what* happened as nearly as you can."
2. "How did *it* get started?"
3. "Please tell me all that you did."
4. "Did it make you feel better to do it?"
5. "What damage did it do?"
6. "How do you think you could make up for the damage?"
7. "What kind of plan do you think would help to make the next time better?"

The attention is focused almost all the time on the event and the values that were involved, very little on Tony. In the first question, the interrogative word is *What* not *Who*. The second question asks "How did *it* get started?" not "Why did *you* do it?" The effort is not to make the child feel like a culprit but to help him live through the event again, guided to look at it this time not only through his own eyes but through the eyes of his mother, the neighbor's child, the neighbor, and any other persons involved. A child must stand and twist his clothes, or say "Kuz" over and over again when he is put through an inquisition. A child cannot know *why*. Many adults cannot. But he can be led to see *what* he did in the whole web of connections which is his family and the neighborhood. He can realize that his act rudely tore some of this web. If it is not rewoven, interaction cannot go on so well

between him and others. What he needs is to be restored into this web of meaning.

#### WHAT ABOUT PUNISHMENT?

How can he be restored? Should he be punished? Is spanking a good punishment?

If we are reasonably sure that the child has made appropriate progress through co-operative evaluation in learning what is better than his present "good" and in finding a better road to his "good," this is sufficient. In such case, his suffering through reliving the difficult situation has rendered him ready for growth. The suffering of a child is not deliberately induced by the parent, of course. It comes to the degree that the child achieves a deeper sensing of all that has gone on. Through this suffering and the insight that emerges he is somewhat released from his old order of values and already started into a better order.

But if the co-operative evaluation through taking counsel together is not effective in helping Tony to become aware of values he had not seen, or appreciated if seen, then some sort of punishment is necessary.

*Punishment is the means we use to bring remote or nontangible value-gains and value-losses into the field of vision or appreciation of the child. If possible, the punishment should vivify to the child the value he did not see or had trampled on.*

Therefore, parents need to punish their children deliberately only in those situations where the consequences of what the child has done are so remote or nontangible or complex that he cannot effectively experience these consequences directly. He may experience the outcomes of his own behavior in one of two ways: (1) by actual suffering the consequences of his



act in the actual situation where it occurred or (2) by suffering the consequences imaginatively through the co-operative counseling that followed his act.

Let's turn back to Tony's case. Suppose he slapped the neighbor's child in order to establish his power over this child. A good punishment would be that of debarring Tony from the privilege of playing with any neighbor children for an appropriate time. Then he "would miss them." This means that he would get some *feel* of the loss of the value to which he was disloyal. He has had enough contacts with neighbor children to know the fun in these. Deprived, he remembers the taste of this value. Now his "mouth waters" just thinking about what it means to be one of the bunch.

The main point is not to make him sorry, although he must suffer some before he is willing to be made ready to give his loyalty where it belongs. The real object is to give Tony a vivid, convincing taste of the value itself and of the impairment of it that resulted from his misconduct. This is the only thing that will really change *him*. A parent can force a child to do certain things, but the child goes through the motions only because he has to. He is not converted. The value involved has not got under his skin. He has not grown.

If there seems no way of making the value vivid to Tony, and if the situation is such that Tony's act must not be repeated, then a more difficult and dangerous punishment must be given. Tony must be helped to realize that the values he has unwittingly trampled on are so cherished by society that he must learn to take better care of them.

It is dangerous for me even to suggest a possible specific punishment here, for everything depends on the particular child, his particular situation in life, and the particular cir-

circumstances of his misbehavior. Of course, if not socially important, the child's act is ignored where he cannot understand. He is directed to other interests. But there are times when we must shock the child sufficiently to make him realize that he is injuring values of great worth even though he himself cannot appreciate their specific character.

Does this mean that spanking is ever right? The question is already answered in general. But to be specific: *if* the act of the child injures values so important to the community that it cannot be allowed to pass, *if* all other means have been tried in the effort to arouse in the child an awareness of the great worth of the value in question, and *if* the child trusts the parent so completely that he will know that whatever the parent does is in his best interests, then, and then only, is spanking justified.

Not many spankings can get past these three *ifs*. The last *if* must never be omitted other than in a crucial emergency. A spanking that makes the child regard the parent as an assailant or enemy does irreparable harm.

In those rare instances where a spanking is used as a means of startling the child out of his present order, its main purpose is the same as that of all *discipline*—to *enlarge the child's appreciation of the values involved in his present act for the sake of a better future.*

Soon after punishment, the child should be given a series of opportunities to deal with the value of which the punishment was supposed to make him more aware. The span of attention and memory of children is usually short. Therefore, these new opportunities must be opened to him soon. In connection with the new opportunities, co-operative evaluation should always be

employed to the extent needed to help the child's growth of appreciation.

But whatever is or is not done in the way of punishment, the final step is always the same. It is the re-establishment of the fellowship of wills between parent and child. The relation between the child and the parent must be restored so that the parent does not continue to be "off there" and the child "here." This feeling of dividedness is unavoidable whenever there is criticism, direct or indirect. The child must be trained to take criticism. There are many times when the parent must be stern and firm in his dealings with the child's behavior. But the child must never be left to feel that the parent is against *him*, although the parent must frequently be against the child's *deeds*. In the end, the child must feel that his parent stands with him (not with his behavior always) and will be with him no matter what! Community must continue.

#### WORSHIPFUL CONTROL

There are two respects in which a balance must be sustained between freedom and control.

To discover the first respect, we shall take a cross-section view. At any one time, the family must provide those conditions which build it into a community of love. Because of the nature of this community, it *encourages and releases the full development and free expression of each unique personality*. Each member can be himself. There is much spontaneity, zest, and joy in life. This is the *freedom*. But this same community of love has drawn, and *continues to draw, each member into such participation that he assumes responsibility for its values and is under the control of its communal valuings*. These control him in the sense that they are more authoritative over him

than individual valuing of his own which might run counter to them. This is the *control* that goes with the freedom.

Balance between freedom and control can be seen in another perspective. It appears in a longitudinal view of the family. It is progressively achieved through the transition from external to internal control of the child which occurs as he develops. During the long span from birth to adulthood, the family must provide those conditions which *keep the child under appropriate external authority in all those areas of living where he is not yet mature* enough to participate in control. *As fast as he demonstrates that he is prepared to do so, the family encourages the child to assume self-control*, which is another term for freedom. They gradually release to him the responsibilities and privileges commensurate with his growing appreciations.

This balance between freedom and control, or between internal and external control, is delicate and difficult to sustain. No parent can do it perfectly. While it is true that many things may impair the measured balance of authority which we exercise and the freedom we allow, there is a greater truth. The Creativity of life is not destroyed by our mistakes. To be sure, it operates more abundantly in the life of the family and of each member when we provide the right conditions. But it is always there, working to increase the quality and meaning of life.

## Chapter IX

### FUN

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The time budget of every family should have a substantial number of minutes reserved each day for fun. There are many jokes about "spending to save," but this is one place where it can be done. Someone has said, "We don't stop playing because we grow old. We grow old because we stop playing." Most of us still like fun. All of us did once. I suppose the reason we now have to budget time for something so likable as fun is that we classify it as a luxury. We can see the value in working because on payday we hold a certain number of concrete dollars in our hand, or we see results in a clean house, a finished garment or the newly painted steps. Yet the values in fun are truly great ones and truly vital. Perhaps, too, there is a little of the Puritan left in us so that we feel that we ought to do what we don't like to do, and that we must put away such a childish thing.

It is especially necessary that parents in a family trying to live its religion should plan for play. In some quarters, popular opinion pictures religious living as a slim, grim ordeal, interesting mostly to overserious individuals who somehow didn't manage to get into the class of "real folks." This is, of course, a caricature of religious living, but, like all caricatures, it grotesquely exaggerates a truth. Religious living is difficult. If one sets out in life to make trivial values—fine foods, popu-

larity by the current pattern, the amateur championship in golf or bridge—his ruling concern, he does not have to invest much. Culturally speaking, the basal metabolism of such living is low. But when one grows to the place where no specific value is made a ruling concern, but rather the Creative Source of all value, he lives strenuously, sometimes dangerously. His whole organism must function close to its maximum of effectiveness, for he must sense and respond to values that are ever emerging, and this not by any fixed formula.

Now, the human race picked up somewhere along the way a notion that is still in force: "*When I get things running smoothly*, all will be well with the world. Life will be good, and I shall be happy." But, as I have said elsewhere, in genuine religious living the goal is not to get things "running smoothly," but to get them "growing meaningfully." Satisfaction can be found in both these formulas for living, but they are of a vastly different sort. Therefore those individuals who have not lived religiously and so have not experienced the satisfactions implicit therein see only the stiffer requirements that religious living posits. Even if they could see the values they would have no adequate idea of the deeply satisfying forms of security, freedom, wealth, and community which make up the more abundant life of the genuinely religious person.

These religious values cannot be appreciated by observing or by telling. They have to be lived to be tasted convincingly. For a number of reasons the quality and meaning peculiar to religious living are more easily tasted in creative fun than in the serious undertakings of life—more easily though usually not so deeply, of course. Consequently, religious people who include fun in their plan of living not only promote the

religious growth of their children and themselves, but they also promote the growth of religion in the community. Observers secure a more balanced view of religious living. This tends to break down prejudices so that religion is less grudgingly accorded its place among major human interests.

It is important that parents understand what true and cardinal values are made accessible when the family lives its religion in the fun it has and has enough fun.

### CREATIVE PLAY

While anything which makes life more rich and meaningful for the individual makes it so for his group also and vice versa, yet some of the values are more particularly pointed to the group, some to the individual.

#### A. Values Pointed to the Group

1. Extending creative interaction to areas not reached while carrying on the serious concerns of life.

One of the services rendered by guests from afar is their providing the occasion when we, with them, shall take excursions to points of interest we've always intended to visit but never have. These frequently are "too near home." As with geographical points of interest, so with personal interests. The drive of responsibility and ambition forces much of our living into channels, and even into ruts. In the early stages we are likely to look longingly toward some of those activities that we feel are rich with interests and value. But after a while, we feel that "life is real, life is earnest." We become overserious about the specific values we are serving because they are the only ones we know. We lose perspective, and hence poise and

tolerance. There is nothing quite so dangerous as an ardently religious person who has got into a rut.

But when our creative interaction with others takes the form of fun, we have to climb entirely out of our obsession, however magnificent. If we have not grown too religiously rheumatic to play, we shall find ourselves taken so far off our routinized way of life that we shall never again be completely satisfied with it. Figuratively speaking, through play we shall find ourselves exploring the detours, the hidden valleys, the canyons and the mountaintops that we had previously hazily glimpsed while we pounded hard along the main road of life trying to push it behind us as fast as we could.

The Fasco family had a playtime that opened hidden areas of creative interaction which otherwise might have been closed to the children forever. Mr. Fasco has come home from work at an unexpectedly early hour. The day is fine. The family decides to have a picnic. When they come to start the campfire, they find that they have forgotten the matches. For a few minutes there is disappointed silence. Then father begins to putter around with dry sticks and some lint. None of the children is old enough to be in a Scout troop, so they all watch excitedly. When the spark comes from the friction, they are full of questions about what really happens and where father got onto the trick.

The first thing he knows, father is telling his children about the journey of their grandparents across the plains to California. He is recounting the ingenious ways by which they met some of the strange conditions they encountered. One of these turns out to be "too funny for anything." One is sad. Another is frighteningly brave. At one point, nine-year-old Annette says, "Maybe that's why grandma's face is so wrinkled."



Tommy mischievously questions, "Say, dad, were you the little boy you told about who climbed the trees to hang up the bacon?" It seemed funny to think of big father ever climbing trees.

But father's recollections of boyhood days have put him in a sporting mood, and he and Tommy go tree-climbing, although mother looks sort of queer at first while she watches father. When the supper is over and the embers are low, talk swings again to the early days of the grandparents. The children live themselves into these days while they listen to the vivid tales. As the family car runs through town on the way home, Annette speaks again: "Say, this town just doesn't look the same any more. Why, you keep thinking that there'll be horses tied to hitching posts the way daddy told about, and everything. I never thought about our town having a story of its life before."

This season of play awakened the memories and imagination of father, and then they all, together with him, traveled new trails through a widening world.

2. Practice in new patterns for interaction among the members of the family.

Fun, particularly in the forms of games and dramatizations, furnishes episodes where life is lived in miniature. Much life can be lived in an hour of games. The episodes by which this deeper way of living is introduced and established have a familiar sound. The game had to be started over again because some "dumbbell didn't listen to the directions." When one wins, the others lose, and both victor and losers have difficult positions to live through. Quarrels arise. Someone doesn't like this game; it wasn't his choice; he isn't going to play any

more. Someone cheats. Someone takes too long to make his play. The erstwhile champion gets beaten, or the same one wins all the time and "that isn't any fun." The whole game becomes so exciting that no one wants to quit to study or go to bed, and yet closing the game is a necessary part of the evening's fun.

The clashes, troubles, and difficulties arising in play incite more readily to the development of new patterns for creative interaction than when they arise in serious matters. In play each participant finds it easier to yield a position or reshape a valuing than he does in a work-situation. Once having yielded, he gets a convincing taste of the greater values to be found when he gives up an established pattern for the sake of the fun of everyone. In time he may be able to carry this practice of yielding-for-the-sake-of-freer-richer-interaction-with-others over into the more serious business of living.

There is a further advantage which fun affords in this developing of new patterns for use in creative interaction. The parents are present and see the whole episode. This rarely happens in everyday living. The parents may hear reports of what happened when they were absent yet these are almost sure to be biased. But the playing of games together may reveal to the parents one child's unwholesome pattern for interaction with others. Furthermore, the exigencies of the game often require that the problems and patterns be dealt with instantly and on the field. Many times the children themselves deal with these swiftly and successfully, if somewhat harshly or rudely. This is as it should be. They are learning to make adjustments on their own initiative when their value-habits and value-ideals clash against those of others.

When serious problems do arise which focus on one child,

it is usually better to re-evaluate co-operatively his valuings after the play is over when parent and child are alone. He can then redeem himself in the next evening of games.

3. Creative interaction in a novel relationship where parents and children are equals under the immediate authority of the rules and courtesies of the game.

This is more of a test for us parents than we always realize. For one thing, the children have the opportunity to observe how we interact with others when we are not the immediate authorities and cannot run things. The converse side of this is that we parents now having to obey orders taste the experience of our children who usually are the only ones who must do as they are told. We are reminded how it feels not to be boss but to be bossed. For another thing, quite often it is the children who excel in games or sports, and they then have the opportunity to observe us in the inferior position. Can we qualify as "good sports"? Third, it becomes apparent to the children what each of us parents values most in the fun. We may be childish and think that winning is the big thing, or we may be mature and believe that the playing *together* counts more than anything else.

Of course, these possible values in creative fun are lost if we parents either pretend an interest in the fun or feign an indifference to losing or to acting under an unfavorable rule when the children sense that we actually do care.

But the two best values that come out of the relation of equality required in fun are these: First, the parents, being relieved of management and responsibility, can release aspects of themselves usually subdued or inhibited. They can react more nearly with the full self and with joyful spontaneity.

Second, the parents have a generous opportunity to balance their usual commands, requests, and guiding standards with such graces as can be expressed through kindly jokes, through gracious subordination to the guidance of a child who plays well, and through tactful reinforcement of the child who is daringly experimenting or courageously holding to his own intention against the advice of the others.

4. Bringing out new aspects of each participant so that each comes to know the other differently, and more completely.

Mr. Stone was a bond salesman with a fine record until the depression. But he had reacted to the changed conditions by becoming tense, touchy, volcanic. During the last two or three years he had insisted that none of the children bring any of his affairs directly to him. Because of tense nerves, he often had had a temper tantrum in their presence. Consequently, the children were decidedly uncommunicative whenever he was around. Play broke down these walls between the children and their father.

It happened this way. Mr. Stone was pacing up and down one Saturday afternoon, waiting for a man who had an appointment with him. He happened to catch sight of his older boy working on a small rowboat he was constructing out of scraps, salvaged from everywhere. The boy was sweating over the fitting together of two boards. Before he had time to think, the father was out there helping the boy on the boat—too authoritatively, to be sure, but helping just the same. The father had made several boats when he was a boy and had keenly enjoyed doing so. I suppose it was the calling up of the memory of this that had sent him swiftly to the boy's side.

The boy was so thrilled at having his father work on the boat

with him that he kept rather still and so did not irritate his father. Fortunately, the man coming for the appointment sent word he could not come. By the time the word came, the father was glad of the message. He donned old clothes and went to work with a will.

As you would guess, he slept better that night than he had for some time, for he was physically tired. Some of the tenseness was gone. Because of the general satisfaction which the father had felt through the play of the afternoon, he went on with the boy. They finished the boat together and then began a tiny sailboat. But a father who plays with a son begins in time to play with his other children. He remarked to a neighbor, "I had no idea that I had such smart, grand kids until we got into all this workshop business. Why, I'd rather play with them than work any day."

The father had got into such a condition that no amount of talking, reading, or preaching about the situation would have put him into relations with his children where each could really come to know the other better. The Creativity of life working through play gradually brought it about.

#### 5. Deepening of the bonds between all the members.

Play introduces new interests to share and new experiences in sharing these. In play both parents and children *may* feel more accurately the intent and affection that each has for the other than in the serious occupations of family living. Beloved characters in books read together become common friends and live with the members. On picnics or excursions, some incident may have caused the members to speak of things deeply hidden below the surface, so that they have revealed to each other their more tender enthusiasms, beliefs, or ideals.

All sorts of symbols develop out of their common experiences in fun which represent meanings that are weaving their lives together. If one family ever told another family its own assortment of symbols without explaining them, this other family would very likely be politely amused or bored. For instance, what do you do but smile when I say, "Soup, soup, beautiful soup!" But this queer symbol brings a warm, happy glow to my children because of certain experiences we had together.

The symbols are at first only accidents, but they come to stand for strong strands of warm, shared experience. Sometimes they have the power to arouse or touch off strong drives during a seeming impasse brought on by some crisis in life. Coming across an object loaded with private meanings has been known to reverse a false decision newly made. It introduces a whole complex of valuings seemingly forgotten. It reminds the individual of bonds he has with life which he may have ignored while feeling the complete night of deep despair. The chief value in the letters that parents write to children away at school or work is not the news in them but the many unintentional references to common experiences which have yielded delight and deeper understanding.

B. Values Pointed Equally to Group and Individual (only one will be cited to illustrate)

6. Giving a more complete experience in integration within the self and with the total group than is easy or frequent in the scheduled activities of the family.

While there is conflict within us or between us and others, our attention is perforce turned mostly upon ourselves. We

are not freed of the bonds of self-concern. But if we can succeed in weaving the web of meanings so truly and beautifully that all sense of conflict is gone for the brief supreme moment, we experience integration within ourselves and within the group.

A great orchestra playing together for a long time under the direction of an individual who is both a great musician and a great person must have this experience at times. I have thought of it when listening to the Boston Symphony Orchestra play a Brahms program. A long-organized baseball team under a great manager must have such experiences too, judging from the way it sometimes plays the game. When this happens no one man is playing the game either in his own eyes or in those of the team. Each man is the team-playing-baseball-through him, and through all of him.

These moments may come in the family. They are more conspicuous during some signal event, such as during the wedding that indicates the appropriate mating of one of the children. We feel it when a long-absent member returns to a home eagerly prepared for his coming. But it can come in the commonplaces too. Sometimes the family becomes vividly aware of the strength and warmth of its wholeness while all the members are gathered at the hearth after completing some strenuous project together. Again, the family may sense itself thinking and feeling and acting as one living integrated whole while all the members move in and out as they get ready for a picnic or a party, or when they are playing a game, or putting on a play, or singing the songs they especially like. Between husband and wife, this sense of oneness can come during the working out of some interest together or during sexual intercourse.

When it comes, it means that the persons as individuals are gone. There is now only a process going on and each member is a part of the process, one as much as any other.

We are, of course, always striving for this experience of unity and community in our living. It can come more easily in play than in work because the conditions are less complex and the consequences less serious. But it does give us the *feel* of integration within ourselves and of interpenetration of valuing within the group. We then know better what to look for and work for in the serious concerns of life. These experiences never just happen. They must be earned even in play, but they are more easily earned there.

C. Values Pointed to the Individual (most of these can be briefly presented because they have been implicit in the descriptions of the values pointed to the group).

7. A bettering of the balance of freedom and control.

In play the individual who tends to be inhibited and over-serious toward his responsibilities experiences release and spontaneity. On the other hand, the individual who resists all the disciplines of life, preferring his own way, experiences the obligation of discipline. He cannot play unless he obeys the rules of the game. Such activities as folk dancing, outdoor games, and dramatics are especially effective in the case of the overcontrolled person. Team games where the group suffers if one player does not co-operate and follow the rules help to bring a balance in the case of the undercontrolled individual.

It is important to keep in mind that it is fun we are talking about. If we feel the need to prescribe certain sorts of fun



sometimes, as we must, we must realize that it is not the game or activity that works the charm, it is the creative interaction between the members. The game supplies only a particular pattern for the players to follow as the valuing of one interact with the valuing of all the others.

8. The restoring of the individuals to more nearly normal functioning.

Laughter, deep breathing, stretching of cramped muscles, and the general organic stimulation induced by play tend to restore each individual to wholeness. This raises the emotional threshold so that minor difficulties, anxieties, depressions, and wounds have no access to the individual. His resistance is high. He can carry on creative interaction with less chance of being touchy or hurt. Creative fun is a far less expensive method for dealing with a moody, touchy, irritable, grouchy, and bickering family than trying to work out all their wrinkles and tangles one by one. The activities do not have to be long or complex. A little creative fun every day will work wonders

9. Inducing a break in the present order of living so that a better perspective can be developed.

How often we come back from going to a play together, or skating, or taking a hike, and find ourselves saying, "Well, things certainly do look different to me now. I believe I can tackle that job and make a go of it." Or, "Why was I so disturbed over what happened? After all, it is a trifle compared with all that is involved." Or, again, we may realize that we have been forging ahead as hard as we could in some certain direction, but now we see that we were not so right as we had at first thought. Being human, we have the propensity to hold

to one purpose, one plan, one order of living, unless something breaks our order and removes our spot-blindness.

10. Cultivating the art of getting the most out of each moment of experience.

At our work we are under the constraint of the thing we are going to do next or the thing that is going to happen next. Our attention is on the future, near or far, not on the present. Hence we do not vividly and richly appreciate the qualities of those things and persons and relationships that fill the present moment. Santayana states that the supreme fulfillment of life consists in being fully appreciative of all the quality and meaning in each situation as we live it through, in spite of decisions to be made, suffering to be undergone, difficulties to encounter, sacrifices to be made, or hardships to be endured. This implies a magnificent poise attainable only through devoted practice.

Play actually achieves this way of living, for it takes place under protected conditions. Consequently, in play one may develop capacity for this way of living under *un*protected conditions. Play is a sort of rehearsal where we practice this free and widened appreciativeness. Thus, we may learn to hold it when danger, difficulty, and pain assail. In play our appreciation of the emerging values is not dulled or drained off by thought of the morrow. Santayana's counsel is not toward shiftlessness in planning but toward the full, deep drinking of the brimming cup of life at each successive moment. We can learn to do this in play where there is no morrow, nor even any crucial consequences today. Once we have developed the habit of finding the supreme fulfillment of life all the time

we are at play, we can carry it over gradually into the scheduled concerns that make up the business of living.

### SOME FORMS OF FAMILY FUN

Games: *table*: parcheesi; yak; Chinese checkers; mah-jongg; chess; croquignole; and the many sorts of card games.

*active indoor*: hot potato; musical chairs; table tennis; relay races; hide-and-seek.

*active outdoor*: beefsteak; shuffleboard; badminton; prisoner's base; drop the handkerchief; and other circle games.

*puzzles* (these are usually more fun when worked in pairs): categories and other pencil and paper games; crossword puzzles (the squared form for any one puzzle can be enlarged easily and hung on the wall where all can see it); riddles; and trick problems.

*dramatic games*: indications; charades; many motions; and statues.

Dramatics: skits; short bits of plays; dramatizing of stories; tableaux; shadow pictures; shadow plays; the reading of a play; puppetry.

Music: singing old favorites; funny songs and rounds; antiphonal singing; singing special music such as neighborhood caroling at Christmas; going to concerts; building up a family orchestra; listening to music.

Art: modeling in clay (all taking the same subject, or each modeling a puppet's head, or each working out an idea in clay for the others to guess, and so on); games which require drawing, as dumb artist; making place cards for company dinner; making Christmas cards; illustrating a family scrapbook of favorite poems by drawings or clipped pictures (each member taking a page); painting or dyeing things for the house; and visiting some particular object or a small section in an art gallery.

Picnics: at some interesting place; in the automobile while on the way to some event; with a neighbor; in the backyard around a fire.

Walking and hiking: walks to explore parts of the town or to observe one feature of the way people live; hikes in the mountains or to some interesting place; weekend treks where the family stops overnight on the way; walking relays where several families join, all going to the homes involved in turn, and enjoying the activity planned for the guests at each home.

Excursions: to the country to see how foods are raised; to factories; to points in the city to see how transportation and communication are facilitated; to sections where racial groups are located; to places of historical interest; to museums; zoos.

Experiments: chemical; electrical; botanical (to see how growth takes place); experiments directed toward inventing some object.

Reading and storytelling.

Discussion: this is most successful when a request for it has grown out of other family activities.

Visiting: entertaining family guests; going to visit old friends or neighbors; entertaining persons whose interests are the same as those of the family in some way; entertaining the pastor and the teachers of public and church schools (not to talk about how Johnny is getting along but in friendliness); and entertaining the special friends of each member.

Taking interest in others: making things for sick children; writing a funny or interesting group letter to some friend or relative who is ill; planning some way of sharing Christmas and Thanksgiving; working out a plan with the neighbors for bettering some condition in the neighborhood; raising a bed of flowers to be given to others as the occasion arises.

"Junking" (this word is one of those family symbols I've referred to. I know no other word for it, perhaps because our own

family used this so much that I can't think beyond it): giving each member of the family a certain small sum of money and then taking the whole family to a secondhand bookstore to mull and browse and spend their money, followed that evening by a personally conducted inspection of the prizes each brought home; giving each member a dime at the beginning of the week with the challenge to find the best buy for a dime, and at the end of the week having a personally conducted exhibition of what each got out of his dime (some "things" they get will not be objects but experiences, so some of the exhibition may be verbal); and there are many other possibilities (this is quite directly an experience in valuing and the interaction of valuing).

Public amusements: going to the movies followed by informal discussion of the human motives, values, reactions, and characters that entered into the play; going to the theater in the same way; attending public lectures for children at the museum; going to see parades.

Getting acquainted with the place where the family lives: planned walks or drives to observe different aspects of it; reading about the town, especially its history; entertaining old-timers and hearing their stories; entertaining public officials.

Radio: planning the schedule of activities so that the whole family can share certain programs; making use of the Town Meeting, including reading the materials prepared; once a week inviting in some other family to have dessert while all listen to some especially interesting broadcast.

The church: the family taking the responsibility of decorating the church once in every so often; raising one bed of flowers just for the church and members who would especially enjoy these, as newcomers, the ill, and the bereaved; when the children are old enough, visiting churches representative of different faiths, having preceded this by sufficient study to do this with appre-

ciative understanding; doing something for the church as a family once a month or oftener, such as painting some chairs for a classroom, making a bulletin board needed in the hall, or repairing hymnbooks; participation in the social activities of the church; opening the home to church affairs.

No effort has been made to make this list a naming either of the best forms of fun or of all forms. The list does show enough of the variety of forms open to use to assure us that there never need be a monotonous hour among those reserved for fun.

#### CREATIVITY AT WORK THROUGH PLAY

All the forms of fun cited above are merely *patterns*. We might say that they are maps of a sort which direct the activities of the players. If the family plays a game, it follows the rules of that particular game, which means that the members act according to the particular pattern known by the name of that game. Each activity has its own distinctive pattern. But the patterns are absolutely worthless in and of themselves. A pattern for play is of value in direct ratio to the extent to which it involves the players in creative interaction. What makes play creative is the free, spontaneous self-expression of all the valuing active at the time in the several players.

It is often necessary for parents to prepare themselves more carefully for creative play than for their serious work. This may seem a strange statement, but a little thought will make its truth evident. Parents are more likely to be "all set" for their work because it is their main occupation. Turning from work to play may prove to be a major operation, emotionally speaking, for the parent who no longer plays naturally. The faces of some parents are so set and solemn that one wonders

if they have played even once in the last ten years. Here are some items illustrating the sort of preparation parents must make before successful participation in play:

Putting themselves into the mood for play, and disciplining their attitude to the point where they recognize its importance.

Disciplining themselves not to be sentimental, but to play squarely and consistently with the children; for instance, not playing too easy and so flattering the child and opening him to the later shock of an unexpected defeat that is devastating because of his illusion of his superiority.

Training themselves to play wholeheartedly in those activities where the child is superior. Usually these are "so childish" that the parent sees no point in full participation. But the satisfaction to the parent is to be found not in the pattern but in the interaction which brings the child's superior valuing into prominence, in this case, with justice.

Clearing themselves as much as possible from such hampering characteristics as the need to save their faces, the craving for personal attention, taking themselves too seriously, the attitude of being God or at least the grand marshal in managing play activities, and the detachment of preoccupation. This whole item involves, of course, the problem of religious transformation.

Family fun, then, is no more creative for the children than it is for the parents. Its significance can hardly be overemphasized. It provides an easier way to experience Creativity than do the purposeful pursuits of life. Having found God in creative play, it is easier to find Him in creative work. One has the *feel* of the sort of thing that goes on where God is at work. He knows better what to look for in those other activities of life where the consequences are so important that they tend to crowd out the freedom and fullness of appreciative

awareness. Furthermore, fun puts the individual into better condition for deeper experiences.

Anyone who can throw himself wholeheartedly into creative play and can experience the spontaneity and richness of life through doing so is never "a lost soul." He is still growing.



## Chapter X

### PROBLEM SOLVING

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Within two weeks after the much-reported Long Beach earthquake, nine families came for help concerning the same problem. To each family the earthquake had brought some terrible loss—their little house, just paid for after years of effort; a beloved relative, perhaps an uncle, one of the children, or the mother or father. The parents stated that they had taught the children over and over again that God would take care of them and of all His people, that God would never let anything bad happen to them or to anyone who really loved Him. Now the teachings had been proved false. The catastrophe had destroyed all in its direct path, good or bad, Christian or not. The children were terrifically upset. Their confidence in their parents and in life and in God was destroyed. These parents were in deep distress.

The intention of these parents had been admirable. They wanted their children to know God in such a way as to love Him. But their faith was without works. They had expressed opinions which were not true. The parents had not earned the right to tell their children about certain of the realities of life, nor about the Great Reality, God. They had not given their power to think and to evaluate to the service of God. They had gone by hearsay, by traditional belief, by wishful thinking. They had not learned by undergoing experience.

Now their untruths had hit back hard. Life could not go on as it should until they could find the truth that frees. They had the additional problem of turning the mistrust of their children into trust again. Their present double-headed problem resulted from their earlier failure to deal diligently and appreciatively with one single problem—in this case, the nature of God in terms a child can understand.

#### WHAT IS A PROBLEM?

A problem is a state of confusion brought on when our valuing no longer work. We believe we have things going very well. Then a new factor appears and life is badly upset. Our first thought is that some outside agency has shattered our house of life. When this thought is true, it is usually only a part of the truth. If we get as far as the second thought, we are likely to find that some of our own ideas, habits, skills, beliefs, attitudes, or standards are inadequate or weak or wrong.

Let us suppose that we are driving an automobile along the highway. Suddenly we find ourselves halted in a plowed field. We are upset in more ways than one! Our first thought is that the highway is to blame. It curved rather suddenly and threw us off. "Wouldn't you think they'd have sense enough to put a sign that people could read at that curve?" we say self-protectingly. Many of us in this situation would not get to the second thought, "I was talking. I must have turned my head. I'd better keep my eyes on the road."

Most of our problems are not so simple as this. But all problems are life signaling to us, "Stop. Look. Listen. You are off the road." If we could learn to look for *the signals* in all problems instead of hunting alibis disclaiming any responsibility

for our difficulties, life would become far more thrilling, rich, and free and meaningful.

A problem halts us. If we understand what a problem is, we get a real thrill out of this halting even while we rub the bruised spots. Why thrilled? Because we realize that we may be on the eve of some new discovery concerning the meaning of life. If we had been able to continue on our way, we would not have known that we were off the road. Little problems force us to make more appreciative adjustment to the realities of life. Big problems break up the whole order of our living or the *status quo* of our society. They make us search for the Great Reality, the Creativity at work in our midst.

If it were possible to arrange everything in the universe once for all so that we would always be able to count on the weather, the sun, and all the rest, if it were possible to produce uniform human beings and keep them so, if it were possible to get our socio-politico-economic system into perfect working order and keep it so, we would have only one problem left. This would be the finding of one sufficient reason for keeping on living in such a monotonous, stagnant, robotic world. Our appreciative consciousness of all value would entirely disappear.

The chief characteristic of life is variability. The more alive we are the more variability there is in our lives. Witness the difference between the variability in the life of the ten-year-old and that in the life of the average eighty-year-old. Consequently, instead of bemoaning our problems, we should welcome them. Instead of feeling injured that we-who-are-trying-so-hard-to-do-right have serious problems, we should treasure each of life's signals. The more alive we are the more problems we shall have. A parent whose child does not seem to be a

problem-child a substantial part of the time had better investigate what is keeping that child half-dead!

There are two kinds of problems. One kind arises out of our failure to interact with the Creativity of life. The other kind arises from the obstructions to Creativity presented by the inertia of the world. There are social, biological, and physiological conditions over which neither Creativity nor we ourselves can have sufficient control to protect the goods of life from certain irreparable ills or destruction. Blizzards and drought, pests and pestilence, earthquakes and tidal waves, wars and exploitation, deterioration of the tissues in the human body—these are among the things that cannot come entirely under creative control. Many times the losses incurred through this second kind of problem are dead losses. In that case, no values arise from their ruins. Our interest here is to be focused on the first kind of problem, those which can be solved in such a way as to promote the enrichment of life. In actuality, the very act of solving them enriches life.

We can describe these problems in theological terms. The Creativity of God continues to operate no matter what happens. It speaks to us on the human level through the interaction of valuing between persons. We move in a certain direction, guided by our present valuing. After a time we find ourselves blocked, or in conflict, or deprived, or upset. We are confused; that is, we have a problem. We have received a signal from the Creativity of life. We are ever reacting on the basis of habits of thinking and feeling and doing developed in a previous, more limited community. These involve us in conflict which forces the breakdown of fossilized behavior. Now with the new insights and predispositions we move in

new directions—until we get another signal, a revelation that again we are going contrary to the Creativity of God.

If we understand the divine significance of this sequential building up and tearing down of our order of life, we can say with Paul, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, *that the power of Christ may rest upon me*. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake . . . (who) said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for *my strength is made perfect in weakness*." Problems force us to discover our weakness of whatever sort, if we dare to face them. They foster the perfecting process.

Unfortunately for the parents upset by the earthquake, they had not encountered a kind of problem which could teach them that God does not keep serious and difficult problems away from those who love Him. These parents had passed on to the children uncriticized traditional beliefs. It seemed they had not even read much in the Bible, for they were not teaching their children that Christ said, "In the world we shall have tribulation." Nor the statement of Paul: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are . . . persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed."

In solving this problem, the valuings of the parents had to be transformed before anything much could be done about the children's situation. It was necessary for the parents to talk humbly and kindly and frankly with their children, telling them that they themselves had believed what they taught, but that those beliefs were mistaken. Now they were going to study hard to find out the truth. And after this, even when they found what looked like the truth to them, they would try never again to lay down their beliefs as the final word,

but only as *the truth in so far as they had discovered it*. Children respect this growing attitude in their parents.

#### SETTING UP THE REQUIRED CONDITIONS

If we reach the place where we recognize problems as signals giving intimation that our way is contrary to the way of the Creativity of life, how do we deal with problems? What must we do to make sure that we shall not lose the thrill of adventure into which a problem can launch us? Through what procedures in problem solving can we grow into the richer, freer, more meaningful life?

Summed up briefly, we must set up those conditions which provide for our creation and re-creation by God. It is all one process. It is the process of growth. But we can distinguish three sorts of conditions.

First, conditions which will bring into formulation and expression the impulses and values which creative interaction generates in us and in those for whom we are responsible. New apprehensions are always arising. At first they are felt rather than expressed. I may have experienced a new quality of freedom but I can't express it because, until now, I have always believed that freedom meant lots of money to spend. Now I *feel* that it may mean something greater, a chance to do something I want very much *because the family trusts me*. This first set of conditions seeks to promote appreciative awareness, intellectual grasp, and full, accurate expression.

Second, conditions which will be instrumental in fitting the impulses and values, now formulated and expressible, into the ongoing of life so that the values sought may be fulfilled. These conditions are largely those of technology and techniques. Any sort of undertaking or material may be involved

—provision for more fresh air, gaining a mastery of the principles of chemistry, developing a special floor plan for a house, damming a river, abolishing a law or making one, buying new rubbers, or choosing a school for the children. Here we are concerned with *what is needed*, and *how everything is to be ordered* (a) to bring to realization the values and (b) to make them yield their quality and meaning to every member of the group.

Third, conditions which provide ever more effectively for the continuous generation of values, that is, for the increasing of freedom, fullness, and honesty in the interaction of established valuing. These conditions have already been discussed.

In actual living there is no time-order in the providing of these conditions. We are working with all of them all the time. It is profitable, though, for purposes of analyzing and improving our present working procedures, to keep these three sorts of conditions in mind.

### TECHNIQUES OF PROBLEM SOLVING

No two problems ever require the same treatment. In each case there is some difference in the persons, in the problem-situation, or in the operative environment. For this reason, problems cannot be solved in the abstract. We have to deal with the actual realities which make up each complex situation. However, there are some suggestions about techniques that can be made. These will be presented in the form of an outline by which to guide the process of problem solving.

#### A. Preparation

This is a reverent pause before plunging into the practical aspects of a problem. Its purpose is to provide an opportunity<sup>9</sup>

for each member to become deeply attuned to the reverberations of the basic values involved in the problem. It is a bowing of the head in prayer, whether literally or figuratively. This preparation may be done solely through the bearing and expression of the parents, through informal conversation, through direct discussion, through reverent meditation, through group worship, or through any combination of these. Choice among these methods depends upon such factors as the nature of the problem-situation, the seriousness of the problem, the maturity of the children, and the present condition and attitudes of the various participants.

By whatever methods it is carried through, preparation is the means of awakening in all the participants a sense of the major values involved in the problem and a realization that the solving of the problem is an opportunity. It does take time, but in the end it saves time, disruptions of personal relations, and bunglings in the solution of the problem.

#### B. Co-operative Investigation

To the extent the problem merits it, this step brings about the fullest, freest, most honest interaction of valuing concerning the best solution of the problem. It includes, of course, all the affected members able to participate. This step consists largely of the procedure we have called Creative Discussion,<sup>6</sup> the description of which we need not repeat here. If there is serious disagreement, there may have to be introduced two other procedures, Constructive Presentation of Individual Valuing<sup>5</sup> and Dealing with Self-promotive Characteristics of Others.<sup>7</sup>

The more interested the participants the more their feelings are likely to well up and boil over. When rumblings and seeth-



ings give warning that some explosion is imminent, the co-operative investigation must be halted and controls subtly furnished for the constructive redirecting of all the precious energy about to explode.

As has just been pointed out, two procedures,<sup>5, 7</sup> already described, will aid here. But there are three other plans, any one of which may be of service. All three require the temporary suspension of the investigation. In the first plan, some vigorous group activity is proposed. The purpose here is to relieve undue tensions and to give each participant a little more time to line up his own drives and desires into better perspective with the group undertaking. A second plan requires that one or both parents make occasion, either casually or directly, for private discussion with the members who have become intense. The purpose of this is not to pacify or subdue them, but to help them to a more inclusive discernment or a sounder basis for their own views. The third plan calls for periods of group worship whenever highly tense moments threaten to tear down what has been built up. Practically speaking, this third plan means the temporary backtracking of the group to the first step, *Preparation*. It is the reattunement of the participants to the reverberations of the enriching values their problem involves. This worshipful interlude is marked sometimes by a period of silence, sometimes by conversation, sometimes by prayer. Essentially it is a renewal of commitment to *the greater than the self*. It is a making-way for Creativity.

### C. Formulating the Emerging Insight

Here effort is focused on narrowing the field of proposals of solution developed through *Co-operative Investigation*. Even

though, in the end, it may turn out that the group-chosen plan results in an order of living richer than their own present one, such a possibility will seem almost incredible to the members at the time. This will be particularly true of the younger members with their foreshortened perspectives. They already know by taste and feel and smell, that is, "by heart," the good in the present order. They cannot know about this new order except by head, until they have begun to live in it.

The final choice of the one proposal to be used for solution will often have to be made through a tentative formulation of the *consensus of thinking and feeling of the group* rather than through a majority vote. One of the parents or an older child who has sensed the *prevailing meaning and direction of the interaction* going on in the whole group may formulate this into a statement of *the most inclusive present possibility*. This feeling out the consensus is ordinarily a more creative procedure than a majority vote. In the latter each is forced to take a definite position which, once taken, calls for defending. A majority vote, however, is unavoidable when there must be an immediate, clear-cut group-decision.

#### D. Imaginative Exploration and Testing of the Insight

The family now imaginatively lives into and through the proposal incorporating the insight which emerged from the interaction of their valuing. This is not a matter of "selling" the plan or of bribing. It is a matter of moving more gradually into the new order called for by the group-developed plan. This step must be allowed sufficient time, for it is the hardest of the whole undertaking. It starts the painful process<sup>3</sup> of yielding present habits, beliefs, time schedule, financial budget, ideals, place of residence, church affiliation, or any one of a

number of things. Sacrifice and self-control are of no worth unless they result in making a higher level of value accessible.

Worship is a large part of this step in the case of the religiously mature members. The younger ones must be able to feel in the bearing and expression of these mature members the confidence which they have gained through worship.<sup>9</sup> Also, these younger members must *be given time* to grope their way toward a strange change in the order of living. The children will probably ask endless questions. The quality of the commitment of the parents will show in their answers. But most of all, these younger ones must get the *feel* that the change is being made with goodwill for-the-sake-of Something the parents revere and serve. From such devotion the children gather reassurance and reinforcement.

#### E. The Reshaping of Living by the Group-chosen Plan

Three undertakings are involved in this step: making the necessary arrangements<sup>11</sup> for putting the chosen plan into operation; co-operative evaluation of the working and outcomes of the plan, particularly in terms of the values sought; and such successive revisions of the plan as render it a better tool in solving the problem. Each of these undertakings involves, of course, the interaction of valuing among the members and ever renewed commitment by each to the values sought.

The procedures described above consist of the interplay of two sorts of techniques: those which set up patterns of procedure which will promote freedom, fullness, and honesty in the creative interaction among the members and those which provide for commitment and recommitment to the values sought and to God as the Source of all values. The manner

in which the procedures have been herein described gives the impression that the problem being solved is a grave one. The procedures are equally applicable to lesser problems, of course. It seemed better to imply a serious problem and so make a more complete report of the process of problem solving than would be possible if a simple problem had been implied.

Sensitive practice will develop increasing skill in problem solving. There are various types of problems which the family must meet. Some of these occur so frequently that it will be worth while for each family to develop its own suitable modification of the basic procedure for dealing with each type. The following are examples of these common types of problems: working its way through a seriously frustrating situation, constructive accommodation to an unsolvable problem, treatment of acute differences arising between members, division of responsibilities among members, creative correction of opinion or of misbehavior, and adjustment of personal relationships involved in age differences, in authority, and in many other aspects of family living.

#### THE CONTRIBUTION OF RELIGION TO PROBLEM SOLVING

The two greatest difficulties in all problem solving are the achieving of objectivity and the gaining of some potential insight. Efforts to solve any problem must miscarry or fail if we cannot see the factors of the situation as they are and if we cannot gain access to pertinent resources, particularly those within ourselves which past experiences have yielded to us.

Objectivity in the treatment of problems in the family is particularly difficult because each member who is trying to solve a problem is intimately and continuously being shaped or nagged by the very persons and conditions which create the

problem. In business or science one can usually get sufficiently far away from the factors which create a problem to view these in perspective. Not so in the family, because the factors are within the very selves of the persons who are interacting all the time.

Detachment marks the astronomer hunting for a star, or the engineer hunting for safe footing for a bridge, but not a father hunting for what's got into his obstreperous child. The materials entering into the problems of the family are the materials of life itself in the form of personalities and personal resources.

Each time a family sets out to undertake the solution of a new problem, its situation presents a sort of paradox. On the one hand, here are the several members, each of whom has accepted or achieved a certain order of life together with all those particular values belonging to it. This order of his has become precious to each, for it has been established only through strenuous investment. He has been taught to live for it. He is getting satisfaction out of it. It is the best he knows. On the other hand, there comes a challenge to yield this achieved and cherished order, to move on into another order which offers at first only unlit, unwarmed promises. On the one hand, each has learned that he gets the most out of life only by wholehearted loyalty to that good in which he now believes. On the other hand, his loyalty is being pried loose and drawn into the service of strange goods which seem unproductive of "the most out of life."

How are the members of a family made ready for problem solving in such a way that they can achieve objectivity and access to insight? Only through ever-renewed commitment<sup>9, 10</sup> to the Creativity of God. Until the family gives its devotion to the Source of all values more completely than it does to

any one specific value or order of life, its problems will never be effectively solved. Creative love must have right of way.

Every family can furnish illustrations of the pain and damage which come when there is no greater reference for their deliberations and contentions than their own individual wants. In the Burns family, the father was a devotee of sports. He insisted that a disproportionate part of the family budget be reserved for tickets for "the big games" and told his family that they just needn't ever count him in on anything on days when there were important sports events. This cut the children off from contact with him during many weekends. He was not interested in callers who knew nothing of sports. He was trying to win over the children to his interest. He was a generous and courteous man in many respects, but he saw everything through his interest in sports. His wife was equally cross-eyed, except that her interest was fine literature. She felt that her demands on the family resources were modest in every other way, so she should be permitted extravagance in carrying out her interest in literature. Her friends were entirely those who shared this interest. She, too, was trying to win the children to her interest.

For a time this extreme duality in the order of living had seemed to be fairly well managed by tit-for-tat compromises. But these only covered up the deepening ruptures. Understanding of each other and sympathy in difficulties decreased rapidly while each more and more regarded his own order of living as vastly superior. Then came the stage of independent politeness, and finally an open break.

If this family had put the community of their love in a higher place than their individual inclinations, they could have developed a degree of creative interaction whereby the in-

terests of each would have enriched the living of all. As it was, their interests divided them, or rather their way of dealing with their interests did so. Creative love is the only sort of love that gives a family room enough in which to live fully and freely. It is the love that creates and re-creates each member anew so that all reinforce, appreciate, enjoy, and promote one another.

#### EYES TO SEE, EARS TO HEAR

The annals of science contain certain passages that are fascinating reading. They recount the experience of some person who heard or saw a signal that no one else did. Replying to the "Stop. Look. Listen." of the signal, one scientist gave the world insulin for diabetes and another liver for pernicious anemia. One evolved the electric razor and another television. One introduced crafts into the schools and another launched the idea of the juvenile court.

No one of us can deliberately increase the values of life. No one of us can even imagine values that have never yet existed *unless some problem throws him into such a state of confusion* that he senses a signal he had not heard until now. Problems are always signals that our private worlds are too small.

When the child is born into the world, his parents wisely and deliberately wall off most of the world from him. His life would be snuffed out if "the blooming, buzzing confusion" of the whole world had impact on him at the start. Gradually the parents push back the walls. Very soon Mr. Baby does quite a substantial bit of pushing back himself. He crawls into things and wanders into places beyond the intent of his parents. He is getting acquainted with the realities of life, step by step, tumble by tumble, and taste by taste.

The more true and balanced the child's experiences with those realities he does encounter the more true and balanced and enriching will be his next experiences. If he is smart and lively, he will "get into trouble" very, very often. If he has softheaded parents, they will rush to lift him out of trouble and clutch him to their palpitating bosoms while they "oozy-woozy" him. If he has appreciative parents, who themselves know the adventure and enrichment that comes through facing the realities of a situation and creating their own way into it or through it, they will encourage his initiative, his independence, and his inventiveness.

An understanding attitude toward problems, the ability to hear the signals each problem is sending, and the skill in using the techniques of problem solving are the essential parts of one of the two most important tools in the child's kit for making a life. The other tool is appropriate, reasonably adequate criteria for evaluation, a set of measurements by which the child can appraise whatever life offers him. Problems are the signals which the Creativity of life sends to us, encouraging us to push back the walls of our little worlds still farther and to get even better tools so that we can know more and more of reality.



## Chapter XI

### DARK DAYS

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A group of college seniors were having a "bull session." They were discussing what they were going to do in the years immediately after graduation. They were feeling the awesome approach of that future which during their years of growing had hung high and far away. Now it was fast becoming the present. Each was telling just how he intended to make his place in life. In the midst of this, a good-looking giant of a fellow said, "Well, I don't see my way vocationally yet, but one thing is sure. I'm not going to fall really in love with anyone. It costs too much."

This young man had sensed a profound truth. When a human being allows himself to become deeply attached to any person or cause, he puts himself in peril. In the nature of things, change of character, deterioration, growth and increase, disintegration, or destruction are continually affecting all persons, things, and causes. When the tree is blown down, the vine goes down with it. In marriage, one mate can outgrow the other to the extent that they can no longer interact creatively. A parent pays a terrific price; he is stricken when his child is seriously stricken. When an individual throws his whole life into a great cause, it may cost his life. It did with Lincoln. Loyalty and love mean investment of our very selves into other selves and things. Consequently, we are then ex-

posed not only to those hazards which may come to us as individuals but also to all those which may come to the object of our attachment. The more deeply we are attached the more devastating can be our wound when calamity befalls our beloved. The more objects of devotion we have the more vulnerable spots we have.

#### THE WORTH OF LOVE AND LOYALTY

Was the young man correct? Does deep love cost too much? We cannot answer until we understand not only how much we pay for our devotion, but also what value it yields to us.

The magnitude of value open to each of us in life depends directly on the strength of our affections. The more passion we put into our several devotions the more shall we discover the richness and meaning of human living. Certainly, he who keeps himself intact is shut away from many momentous hazards. But he is just as certainly shut away from many momentous values. "He that saveth his life shall lose it." The self-contained individual may well smile to his cool, complacent, imperturbable self. He has no one else to smile to.

He who loves deeply lives dangerously. There are no limits to which love will not go to fulfill its devotion. It is not schooling that turns callow, wisecracking, "emancipated" youth into personages of great caliber. It is devotion to work they respect, love for a mate and children, and consecration to those causes they call great. Love and loyalty engender insight and courage that carry us farther than our minds by themselves can possibly advise or our imaginations devise.

We have here in the United States an inordinate number of women whom I call "duchess dowagers." They have always managed to "marry well." They "live well," very well. But

they never allow themselves to become entangled in anything that would disturb their perfectly groomed, calculating, frigid composure. They produce nothing. A number of years ago, a particularly torpid specimen of this genus was coming home from a smart reception with a young woman, glowing because of her recent advance into motherhood. Mrs. Marble said to the young mother, "I suppose you are thrilled past words over your baby. But did you ever stop to think that a young woman who has the talent you've already demonstrated has no right to be having babies? You should leave baby-tending to those who are sort of bright but can't get anywhere in the world."

These freezing words left a scar in the young mother so that she has never forgotten them. When she told of the incident not long ago, she said, "How completely mistaken that woman was, I now know past any doubt! My motherhood has done things to me and for me beyond all calculation or comparison. And as a mother, I have done things and undergone things that would have been impossible for me as an individual. Life has brought a kind of wealth not even conceivable to me before."

#### THE COST OF LOVE AND LOYALTY

Great worth comes only at great cost. The magnitude of value we experience in life depends on the warmth and depth and strength of our several devotions. Yet each attachment involves liabilities as well as assets. If we love strong enough and long enough, suffering is inevitable. Change is the only unchanging thing in this whole world. No object, no person, no cause is inviolable. Even while we treat the objects of our devotion as though they were to be ever the same "in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health,

as long as we both shall live," the seeds of the change that will be are already within them. And within us.

Some of the change may be what we term growth, increase, strengthening of character or of conditions, construction, and integration. Some of it may be what we call regression, decrease, weakening of character or of conditions, destruction, and disintegration. Again, what we think is growth and construction may in actuality be regression and destruction, or vice versa. In any case, either type of change can mangle or destroy the bonds of our attachments. Suddenly we are confronted with the fact that some beloved object is removed from our sphere of action. That which made life eminently worth living is gone from us. A dark day has come.

Hardship and difficulty cannot of themselves bring on a dark day. Think of the times when we have been so worn down or disrupted that we could hold on only by a grim summoning of every energy at our command! Yet we were ecstatic with joy seeing the gap between our efforts and the much-desired object lessen to the point where certainty was ours. We've been working all night with a child suddenly stricken with pneumonia. By morning we can hardly hold our eyes open. We stagger about. Our skin crawls and our stomach is distressed. Yet we are brimming with joy. The crisis is past. He is better.

Even the death of a loved one does not necessarily bring a dark day. Think of the difference in the darkness or brightness of the day the loss of "mother" makes for a child of eight and for a man of thirty-eight, now married and with his own family. There are circumstances when the certain imminence of our own death does not bring a dark day. Even the sight of the terrific suffering of a mate cannot bring a dark day if it

is the sign we have been waiting for that the forces of life are taking hold with more surety after a serious operation.

What is it, then, that can plunge our lives into a complete "blackout"? Just one thing—*feeling that there is now nothing worth living for*. We say, "All that I cared for in life is gone—swept out from under me." Or, "I've been pulled up by the very roots. Life has lost all its meaning." There is no way to go and nothing to make going worth while anyway. Every one of us can stand almost any amount of suffering so long as he does not lose his sense that there is a lot to live for. So long as life counts for him, an individual can accommodate himself to the loss of something very dear or to the blocking of his achievement, can hold up under loss of status or of friends, can endure ignominy, or can withstand even betrayal by those whom he trusted.

Now, it is true that any one of these sorts of suffering can help to induce a dark day if the causes continue to operate long enough. But it is not the particular suffering that causes the dark day but the fact that it has continued unceasingly until it has worn down the individual to the point where he feels that life is not worth living.

### THE DARKNESS

However complete the conviction that there is nothing to live for, there always is. The blindness causing this complete conviction is due to the fixation of devotion upon one specific object, person, or cause so that the whole world becomes wrapped up in it. When this one is lost to the individual, he feels stripped of all resources. He is so blind that he cannot see that the dark day is itself a sign to him—a sign that he

has not caught the signals that the Creativity of life has been sending him.

The *value* in any situation is that pattern of interrelationships which enables the situation to yield quality and meaning of a sort we can appreciate. Whether we appreciate the available quality and meaning much, little, or not at all, this creative interaction is going on all the time between many different things, ourselves included. Whenever our devotion has fastened upon some one of these interacting things, and has treated this one as all-important, we are slowly but inevitably moving into a dark day.

Values cannot reach human beings except through value-carriers. It becomes easy then to mistake the value-carriers for the value itself. It is devotion to the value-carriers instead of to values that gets us into trouble much of the time. It is necessary to understand the differences between them.

A *value-carrier* is anything that helps to promote creative interaction. It is that person or object or cause which is of such a nature that interaction between it and other things yields quality and meaning in living. Almost any sort of person or object or cause may become a value-carrier at almost any time. Which value-carriers can be most effective in any specific instance depends on the total situation. If I am exhausted while trying to swim across the lake, an approaching boat manned by two lifeguards is a value-carrier. But if I have just settled down to fish in a quiet pool, an approaching boat is not a value-carrier, even if it is the same boat and manned as before. A mother accurately filling the food formula worked out for her baby may or may not be a value-carrier. She is so if the formula actually does produce normal growth in the baby. She is not if the formula does not produce such growth, even

if both physician and mother had all confidence in its efficacy. I, myself, am a value-carrier in each situation with which I am vitally connected. But there comes a time in each situation when I cease to be so, and then I should drop out. In some situations this might even require my death. This is one thing meant by dying for a cause. Whenever we pass from one role to another, we pass from being a carrier of one kind of value to being a carrier of a different kind.

Two conditions concerning value-carriers need emphasis. First, that which is an effective value-carrier now may cease to be a value-carrier in any degree next hour, next week, or next year. Second, devotion to a value-carrier must be kept subject to the control of creative interaction, else we shall keep on serving it indefinitely, not realizing when it ceases to carry value. Odd though it may seem, our devotion can be directed to Creativity through a value-carrier without our realizing it. We may think we are devoting ourselves to the value-carrier when really we are devoting ourselves to God. For example, a parent's love for a child may be so directed that, when the time comes, the parent may permit the child to leave home without making any commotion about it, no matter how painful to the parent. However, when this control of Creativity reaches the highest level, we shall consciously recognize that our devotion to Creativity is stronger than our devotion to any value-carrier.

This can be illustrated by pointing out two types of marriages. In one, the husband and wife are completely indispensable to each other. "The sun rises and sets for each in the other." Everything that either does is guided and governed primarily by his thinking of what will serve and delight the other. All their friendships, interests, activities, ideals, and

beliefs are as nearly identical as is humanly possible. In this case, their interdependence enslaves them. Each is held within a world consisting of only two persons most of the time. By their own way of life they are excommunicated from any appreciable interaction with others. Such a couple usually congratulate themselves, privately and publicly, upon their "perfect love."

But when one mate in such a marriage dies, the other is a pathetic figure. Literally, he is at loose ends. He has "nothing to tie to." The only bonds that connected him with the web of meaning of life are broken. Life isn't worth living. His day is blacker than night. Even if neither dies much before the other, love of this sort will dry up. Life together becomes an automatic routine, suffused at times with a sentimental glow, but growth of quality and meaning has ceased.

In the second type of marriage, the husband and wife find in their relationship a richness, freedom, and meaning beyond anything they had dreamed possible. But somehow they sense that they must keep their little web of meaning connected with the larger web of life's meaning. Instead of finding each other by devoting themselves exclusively each to the other, both devote themselves to values greater than themselves. They lose themselves in first this and then that interest or cause, only to find greater selves after each experience, greater because of the growth of their appreciative consciousness.

When one mate in this marriage dies, the other suffers a hundred times a day. He suffers on each occasion when his interaction with others makes him painfully aware of the absence of the interaction between himself and his mate. He starts to do something important and calls out eagerly. Only the silence answers, a tragic silence. His suffering is agonizing.



But it can be borne. The couple in this second marriage have allowed their meanings to become interwoven with the larger web of life. They are passionately attached to each other, but both are vitally attached to the larger community. Neither can be left without rootage.

The person who experiences the dark day, then, is that one who has not answered the signals sent him by the Creativity of life calling him to build new roads into the universe of meanings.

#### LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

There is always something that makes life worth living. *There are always the materials out of which to build a life.* It is the *sense* of loss of all meaning that has shut out all light. We must improve our receptivity to the signals which the Creativity of life is always sending. We must get ourselves connected with the community of value-carriers. We must become participants in creative interaction. Or, if it is others and not ourselves who at this time are lying face-down in the darkness, we must help them to do these things.

How?

No matter how numb and dumb and worthless we feel, we must begin to respond to the outreachings and activities of other persons. We must not let the inert mass of us short-circuit or block the intercommunication of the meanings of life. Even though our first responses may themselves be of little worth, they are of enormous value in that they signify that the wires are up again and the currents of life are flowing through. If we put this in the vernacular, we would say that we "must put ourselves into circulation again."

We must begin to strengthen our sensitivity and responsive-

ness toward others so that a community can grow which will create us anew. "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death." Again, "If there is therefore any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions, make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, . . . not looking each of you to his own things, but *each of you also to the things of others.*"

When a dark day comes, there are always two sorts of things to do, work on the conditions which are without one and work on the self. The latter is always possible, though the former may not be at all times. I have never yet seen an individual undergoing a dark day who did not need a certain constructive approach. I refer to bettering the physical condition to the end of overcoming inertia and building up the power of resistance. We can think and brood ourselves into a paralyzing state of melancholia. But when we begin to act, life saves us in spite of ourselves. We start some activity. Our bodies become tired instead of merely tense, and we sleep a little. Then we have the energy to do more and so can get more tired and sleep a little deeper and longer. We begin to see and hear and taste and touch and smell again. This stirs up automatic responses which involve us further in the ongoing of life. Appetites begin to quicken. Our established contacts with others, our obligations, affiliations, and predilections drag or drive us into active participation.

Fortunately for us, life will not let us alone. As soon as we begin to respond, we begin to sense that there still exist things that make life worth living. If there are in our situation in life those persons who depend on interaction with us for some

of their important values, so much the better. They will express toward us the love that will not let us go. The constant looking to us of our children and their claiming of us through the soft, warm touches of their fingers break down the circle that shut love out of many areas of our living. But even where there are no intimate bonds with their potent persistence, light begins to break into the dark day as soon as we begin to interact with others. It cannot fail to be so. The Creativity of life is operating all about us all the time. "If we are faithless, he abideth faithful, for he cannot deny himself." But unless we get into action, unless we respond to the specific outreachings of life to us, we cannot get the signals that Creativity is sending forth. "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."

#### INSURANCE AGAINST DARKNESS

If the *sense* of the loss of all meaning from life is the cause of dark days, then whatever guarantees us against experiencing such a sense of loss of meaning, guarantees us against dark days. How do we find this guarantee? We find it in the life that is crucified in Christ.

This crucified life gives the one who lives it freedom and dominion over every circumstance. In the crucified life, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Living the crucified life releases one from every bondage by which he can be dragged down when that which he loves is laid low, or overwhelmed when the object of his devotion is destroyed. The crucified life augments his power of resistance because he has inexhaustible resources in Christ. Paul describes

this kind of living: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, . . . nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ."

Living this crucified life requires that we recognize God as the creator and sustainer of all the preciousness in the objects of our affection and loyalty. It is His Creativity that creates the relations between two persons who love each other, and the relations between these two and other members of their community. The value in each relationship issues from the Creativity of life and fades and passes whenever Creativity leaves it. Creativity leaves it when the relationship is no longer carried on and enriched by the interaction of valuing of the persons involved.

Several years ago Dr. Yerkes of Harvard University related an incident in his classroom which illustrates fixation on a relationship with what had once been a value-carrier after creative interaction had ceased. It vivifies startlingly the point we are here making. He told of a mother ape who continued to carry her infant in her arms long after it had died and begun to disintegrate. Her baby had become so precious to her that she had identified herself with it. Now she could not let the baby's form go, even though the most real thing about her baby was gone. Because the baby's body had once been the value-carrier for interaction between it and herself, she held onto it tenaciously. The psychological term for this is *possessive fixation*.

Fixation is always some form of love of the self, and not

only love of the self but of the *old* self. This is one of the most common forms of the pathology of love and loyalty. Parents are particularly subject to it. Many of them are not willing to have the child grow up and become independent. They love the personality-as-it-is, the particular hulk of flesh with its particular present characteristics.

But no person can stay the same for long. Therefore, the love of an object as an object is doomed. The *love and loyalty must be given to that Creativity which is felt and heard through the interaction of valuing between the two*, and not to the present form of the individually existing object. This object, after all, is only a carrier of value. Just so soon as this interaction of valuing becomes absent in a relationship, just so soon do the forms of the individuals cease to be value-carriers in that relationship. This can be illustrated by saying that a parent should spend himself upon promoting the creative interaction of valuing between his child and himself and other members of the community instead of spending himself on adoring and adorning the child as he is. This latter treatment short-circuits the attention of the child back on himself so that he becomes "a spoiled child." To the extent that growth does not continue, this parent, like the ape mother, is holding a spoiled child too close in his arms.

Our love cannot be too deep, our passions cannot be too strong, our loyalties cannot be too dominant, if these are *centered in the creative interaction of valuing* between ourselves and the objects of our love, passion, and loyalty. When this is done, we are under the control of that divine Creativity which operates at the human level most appreciably through this creative interaction.

We are bound to experience suffering, regrets, poignant

memories, wistful yearning, and sorrow when the Creativity of life has worked such a change in the order of our living that we are cut off from persons and objects which have been carriers of splendid, delightful, enriching, and exalting values. We have associated the values with the particular value-carriers so long that it is painful to have the old value-carriers fade and pass. We hate to relinquish the empty forms, however useless or spoiled. This must continue to be so. We are human. But if our supreme loyalty has been given not to these value-carriers but to the Creativity that has worked through them, we are not plunged into a day of total darkness. Life still has meaning. More, because we have experienced the Creativity of life, we have the unshakable conviction that meaning is growing all the time. We know that God is the Source of values, not only those which we now appreciate but even of many not yet in existence.

#### DARK DAYS FOR THE CHILDREN

We have described the way of insuring against dark days for persons who are mature enough to understand what the crucified life is and to live it. But what about the little children? Do they have truly dark days? And if so, what carries them through?

Children certainly do have dark days, very dark ones. The losses which bring dark days to them may seem trivial to us. It takes little to change the world of a child into a place of radiant splendor or of utter darkness. Since it takes so little, the "dark days" of a child are usually transitory. He does not suffer so deeply or so long, although he does suffer as completely. It is the same all-over experience.

Besides the dark days of children brought on by the loss of

their own specific "goods," they are often subject to another sort from which they should be shielded whenever possible. These latter are induced by their living closely with adults who themselves are experiencing dark days. Like sensitive plants opening and closing in sunlight and shadow, children sense and react to the strong emotional experiences of those with whom they live. Divorce, business failure, great loss, anything that pulls hard at the deep roots of the adults pulls hard at the shallower roots of the children. For instance, the most heartrending aspect of professional work with a husband and wife discussing divorce is the silent, helpless bleeding of the children over the wounds made by the conflict between their parents. Again, the children are wrung by the despair of the parents when these are experiencing some catastrophic loss.

What can be done to bring light into the dark days of a child? Three things. The first is the same as for adults. Get him into action. Help him into such interests and associations that he will be able to *feel the connections which tie him into the human community*. Second, lead the child on to another value-carrier which will mean as much to him as the lost one did so far as this is possible. Persons and groups outside the family can help in these first two services to the child. The third is a task primarily for the parents and close friends or relatives. These trustees of the child must so strengthen their own faith and so express it that the child will get *the feel* of this faith of the parent. They will sense that there *is* hope, that there *are* hidden values, only to the extent that the parents do, for the child cannot experience God directly until he is more mature. Only the mature can find hope and life through commitment to Creativity. Children must depend upon their

parents for *the feel* of possibilities they cannot themselves know about.

Who of us that has read it can ever forget John Steinbeck's description of the little children standing with their parents after a dust storm had changed the face of their whole world? The farmer stood silent and immovable looking at his devastated corn field. His wife stood silent and immovable too, eyes intent on the face of her man. The corn was immensely important, of course. But there was something more important still, something that could make corn grow again if this something had not gone down with the corn. The children peeped furtively up into the faces of their parents, then began to draw lines and signs with their toes in the dry, soft dust-powder. After a long time, the man's face began to set hard and strong. Then the woman knew that the essential thing, even this time, had not gone down with the corn. She went into the house to work. The children began to play. The day was not totally dark.

#### THE LIGHT OF FAITH

The measure of our commitment to the Creativity of God is the measure of the degree of our resistance to the only kind of suffering that can bring a dark day—the *sense* of the loss of all meaning from life. The measure of our commitment determines the amount of strain and difficulty, of pain and bad fortune, we can endure and still have faith. Such commitment augments our power. There are many sincere, intelligent people who do not put their faith in God yet do have resources for recovery. Furthermore, good fortune, normally functioning glands, favoring weather, and a host of other matters definitely raise our threshold of resistance against despair. Keeping our-



selves in full health gives us a tremendous resource. Nevertheless, only by faith in God can resistance be carried to the point where it is indomitable.

However, this faith must be a living faith and that means a working faith. To contrast faith with what we can do to improve the situation is to falsify it. Faith is commitment to Creativity and this means active participation in that reciprocity of behavior which expresses our own valuing and apprehends those of others. Hence, faith can never be a substitute for anything that we *can* do. Work alone avails *something*, while "faith without works is dead." "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" Again, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Faith is commitment to the Creativity of God which can make every experience of ours a further step into the wisdom and the freedom, into the inestimable riches and the love of God. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. . . . Where is the wise? . . . hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? . . . The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. . . . But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; . . . that no flesh should glory in his presence." Again Paul speaks, "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet *not I, but Christ liveth in me . . . I do not frustrate the grace of God.*"

## Chapter XII

### CELEBRATION AND WORSHIP

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The life of each of us is a long quest for the best. Hidden in the depths of us is a sanctuary where we have enshrined first one and then another "best" as we joyfully found it and then ruefully or sorrowfully abandoned it. In so far as we have given our devotion wholeheartedly and appreciatively to each "greatest value" in turn we have tasted it deeply and it has become a part of us. This is the chief difference between us. Each of us has tasted deeply of a different combination of values. This is the chief reason why interaction between us is so creative. Each of us responds with different valuings which mutually re-create each other. This is the chief cause of our common search for God. We have progressively discovered the inadequacy of one specific good after another until now we seek the Source of all good. Yet, made up as we are of these different values and valuings, we never quite come to the point where we can say in perfect unison, "Here at last is The Best which we all now see clearly and fully."

#### WORSHIP

The progression of our loyalties during our maturing years is one long succession of intermittent conflicts where two or more specific "goods" pull and haul at us to win our commitment. But religious maturity has its unmistakable mark. It is

the unqualified commitment of the whole self to the way of God. This does not mean that religious maturity is free from conflict. But the major conflict is no longer between two or more specific goods that contend for place as the ruling concern of our living. In religious maturity, the major conflict is between our chosen ruling concern, which is God, and all those interests which tend to divert from it our attention, energies, abilities, and other resources for living. The purpose of worship is to resolve this conflict and clear away everything that interferes with our complete commitment to God. Whitehead quotes the Bible in calling this function of worship the "cleansing of the inward parts." Kierkegaard states that "Purity of heart is to will one thing."

Worship is the appreciative recognizing of worth at its source. It has many forms and functions. At any one time our choice from among these must be based upon their efficacy in keeping the heart pure. When the heart is not pure it is corrupted by purposes contrary to our religious commitment. It has motives and interests which run counter to the working of Creativity. Purity of purpose, of love, and of loyalty are achieved by having one devotion supreme over all. This devotion is given to God alone, who is ever creating and re-creating us and our order of living.

There is sometimes much discussion about the relative effectiveness of the several most common forms of worship. Some individuals turn most frequently to one form and some to another—music, poetry, meditation, ritual, Biblical reading, prayer, praise, creative inquiry, fellowship with a worshiping group, repentance, and consecrated work. But since people are not alike and no two situations are ever identical, it is well that there are many practices from which to select that one

which best *keeps the heart pure in ever-renewed commitment of the whole self to God and His goodness*. However strange to tradition may be a practice of worship, it is genuine worship if it fulfills this chief function. The great danger and perversion of worship is not that of introducing strange practices, but of performing any practice in disregard of what it must accomplish.

Most of our forms of worship make use of words. We feel that we have already got hold of a reality to some extent when we have been able to put our thinking and feeling about it into words. This is true to a certain extent. The very effort to formulate and express the impulses and values which creative interaction generates in us is one way to deepen our awareness of what the Source of all good has done to us. That is why the interaction of members of a small group who freely and honestly share their deepest experiences can contribute so much to the enrichment of life. Such sharing is a creative process. Furthermore, when we have once formulated a valuing, we have it in usable shape. Someone has said, "Words are the pegs upon which we hang our experiences." Each word which we have formulated during our wrestling to understand and express the possible meanings of certain experiences is a precious tool to us. It is not only precious, it is unique, for no two people have exactly the same set of experiences hanging on the word-pegs which they use meaningfully. Once certain experiences are pegged onto suitable words, they are more accessible to our use.

Words, however, even at their best are only value-carriers. We are hugging a dead child in our arms just as surely as was the ape-mother when we treat words as though important in themselves. This is what we do when we substitute words for

commitment. Habits can be destructive as well as constructive. We can train ourselves to feel all well groomed and pure inside because we have said certain words in a certain situation, even though our first act demonstrates no increase of purity.

Examples are common of several uses of words in what is called worship, some misleading, some effective. There is the one just cited of substituting words for that genuine commitment which re-creates the individual or group. This is based on the illusion that "good" words will make living good. But the words as words actually have no potency over the way of life. On many Sundays in many churches many words like these are spoken, often in a hushed voice where the inflection is dead habit, too.

Second, words and the speaking of them may be only a grant to convention or to authority, as when people "say prayers" in church while their attention is completely centered on how they will put through a certain deal the next day and as when the children "say prayers" to satisfy a required part of the day's routine.

These first two uses of words in worship are futile. We turn now to two uses which are potent.

When words are used in the spirit of genuine worship they open doorways to a certain type of experience. We may not be able to define the words, but when they are spoken or thought they open up an area of experience rich in meaning for us. For many people, *love* and *the grace of God* are examples of such terms.

Lastly, there is that use of words most potent of all in worship. In this case they are used to relate the personality of the speaker to God in such a way, and in such an emergency, that

Creativity transforms the impulses and habits of the personality and lifts it to a new level of living.

In worship, then, words may be self-deceiving devices, may be mere grants to convention or authority, may be the open sesame to an area of experience long undergone and cherished by the devotee, or may be direct expressions of some new transformative working of God.

But words are not essential to worship. Indeed, they may stand in the way. Then there must be found some other symbolism to lead the individual or group into that relationship to God wherein he or they can be transformed in the direction of enriched living.

Some years ago I was working with a group of older boys and young men on Sundays and "club night." They lived meagerly in an isolated spot. Their only contacts with the outside world were through the public school, the yearly visit of an official of the church of their parents, and the little group of us doing work with the children and the young people through clubs. They had no concept of fun other than carousing and rowdyism. Displeasure against anyone was expressed instantly by attack upon his person, especially if "my girl" was involved.

Through every method and device known to me, I had tried unsuccessfully to arouse these crude individualists to an awareness of something greater than themselves and to bring them to the place where they could get joy and value out of interaction with each other. For instance, when on Sundays I had talked with them about God and His goodness, not in conventional ways but in terms of their own interests and conduct of life, they responded enthusiastically by rattling off catechism and memorized prayers by the yard, grinning to think they

could produce what would please me. But their ways and relations with each other were not affected. The only outcome was a strong personal loyalty to me which incited them to do what they thought I considered the fine or sporting thing—*when I was present*. This was poor motivation, and made an added problem.

Finally I decided that I had better start where they were in my effort to arouse them to a sense of a goodness that grows and leads them to seek a new kind of richness in their conduct and relationships. It had become obvious that words would not work. I had to turn to other tools for accomplishing this. A "Wonder Chest" proved markedly efficacious as the first tool. It was made out of the larger size box-type of letter file, attractively covered. Each Sunday I closed into it something that I had found during the week that was awe-inspiring or peculiarly admirable or breath-takingly lovely, such as a mounted collection of weed seeds which illustrated the ingenuity with which seeds travel to new locations, an exquisite piece of craftsmanship, an unbelievably perfect rose bud, some pollen from a pine cone under a small microscope, a historical picture of some people trying to work out a common agreement, and so on and on.

We developed a little ritual for the use of the Wonder Chest. First we became quiet, preparing ourselves for "a taste of some unusual goodness in the world." Then the boy whose turn it was set the box on the floor in the center of the circle so that all could see into it, and unclasped the lid. After all the spontaneous comments had been uttered, we again sat quiet while we meditated on whatever of truth or goodness or beauty or fine spirit we had observed or experienced during the week. A discussion followed, based on whatever area of interest

promised to be most fertile for furthering the growth of a spirit of creative fellowship. After this, we worked out one, *only one*, specific plan for the next club meeting which we decided together might "make it go better and be more fun."

It was thrilling to watch these boys opening their eyes, first to the richness in nature and things all about them and then gradually to the possibilities of a growing richness in their human interrelationships. Their commitments to what they came to see as "good" were sometimes odd, but they were re-constructive. New realms of value in their human dealings were opening to them. They were having their first experiences under the control of God even though they did not yet recognize these as such. Appreciation, once awakened, had led into celebration of new kinds of richness, and celebration was pointing the way to worship of the Goodness that grows.

#### CELEBRATION AS WORSHIP

In concrete terms, celebration is worshipful when it either expresses, or promotes, or intrinsically involves us in creative interaction. For it is through creative interaction that the Creativity of God is most clearly expressed to us.

There are three things to be distinguished when we think of celebration as a way of worship. First, celebration must be distinguished from display, which is not celebration at all, even though it may be deceptively entitled Thanksgiving Celebration or Celebration of Easter. Display is an effort to stir in others convincing awareness of one's own possessions or accomplishments. Display says, "Just see how good *I* am!" It always sets the one displaying apart from his fellows, for its very intent is to contrast his finery with their deprivation. Hence, display actually blocks or kills creative interaction,



whether it occurs in school exhibitions, in family events, or in church ceremonies.

Then there are celebrations which are not religious but neither are they mere displays. They magnify and glorify certain things, events, persons, causes, which those participating feel are worth-full. We need more of such in modern life, given in the name of great values. The commercial interests have demonstrated that glamorous celebrations of almost any product have a convincing effect. The forces of evil are past-masters at celebration. The forces of good need to become more so. Families would do well to celebrate the achievements of members or of the group, the improving of community conditions, some unexpected increase in resources, and so on and on. It is celebration and not display so long as the attention is focused on the rich values involved and not on the improved advantage or status of the individuals concerned.

*Religious celebration issues in a purification of the heart.* This is accomplished by magnifying in our living the object of our supreme devotion. By celebrating it we put it into such perspective that it towers over all else and possesses us more completely.

Christmas is our greatest religious celebration. At that season we celebrate that joy which is peculiarly Christmas joy. It is the joy of widened and deepened interaction of love between all men, and especially between members of the family. It is the released Creativity of life coming down to us from the ancient past.

The interchange of gifts symbolizes this magnified work of love in our midst, expresses it, quickens it, and deepens it, in so far as the gifts are free, full, and honest expressions of valuing. Furthermore, gifts promote creative interaction with the

larger community also in so far as there is genuine outgiving and in-receiving between the family and its world-neighborhood. To the degree that this spirit of Christmas gets into us and continues to work in us, it modifies us and what we do and think and say. It is creative.

But some reader may be thinking, "No! I suppose there's no harm in what you say, but that is not what we are celebrating at Christmas. We are celebrating the birth of Jesus in the manger at Bethlehem."

What is the meaning of the birth of Jesus in the manger? He told us why he came—"to do the will of him that sent me," to give "a new commandment unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you," to introduce a new order of living, the life more abundant. Jesus' birth marked the entry into human life of this working of love, freed from the constricting bonds of class and race and status which had heretofore corrupted and confined it. So when we celebrate the birth of Jesus in the manger, we are celebrating this released and magnified Creativity of life which works at the human level through creative interaction. It operates with especial richness of meaning during the Christmas season.

We can put this into theological terms. At Christmas we are celebrating the saving power of creative love which was born into the world at Bethlehem, was crucified on the cross, and has since continued to operate in the lives of men even until now. "He that knoweth not love knoweth not God. . . . Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

The Hudson family had been hunting and hunting for a bit of wildwood on a lake where the children, yes, and later the grandchildren, would come, where their friends might

visit, and which they might, at times, open to the use of neighbors. They were trying to feel and picture into being a permanent center for the growing unity of the family. Finally, they found a spot more lovely than they had dared dream of, and it was within their means. The first day of their ownership, the family stood on the top of a sand ridge overlooking the lake and thrillingly magnified all the values that they believed could now be brought into realization. Impulsively, they broke off bunches of the wild grapes growing there and pressed the juice out of them on the ground as they gloried in what was to be. Then they became silent in the presence of Something greater than they, which they felt but could not speak, the Creativity of God at work. This was real religious celebration, however unnamed.

Celebration has been given a large place in this chapter because it is the chief way by which a child comes to feel the significance of the religious commitment of his parents before he is mature enough to be religious. He is quick to distinguish, moreover, the difference between celebration and display. Genuine religious celebration must not be neglected in a family concerned for religious growth. The purpose of the celebration must be, however, to glorify God and not to indoctrinate the children. It is what the children *feel within us*, not our explanation, that counts. If each celebration is a purifying of our hearts by a deepened willing of one thing our children will never fail to get the feel of this.

#### REPENTANCE AS WORSHIP

Repentance of sin is as important in worship as is celebration. There is a modern shrinking from the term, a squeamishness in talking about sin at all. In large part, this can be traced back

to the melodramatic or terrifying ways in which "the wages of sin" and "repentance of sin" used to be presented. But we do sin, all of us, from the great to the lowly.

Sin is disloyalty to God. It includes not only those of our deeds and thoughts that we know to be disloyal but also those that are disloyal without our realizing. These latter spring from habits and other predispositions of our personality which hold us back from free, full, and honest creative interaction with others. Repentance of sin means repudiating all bonds, whether conscious or not, that block the way of creative love.

Worship that takes the form of repentance, then, must include not only the submitting of known disloyalties to the transforming power of God, but also an unflinching self-searching for those unknown aspects of our personalities which are still under bondage to lesser gods. Our insights as to what these aspects are come chiefly through the interaction of our valuings with those of other persons and groups. Not that we are always wrong when there is a clash of valuings, but that a clash always indicates that neither party has *all* the truth and righteousness. A serious clash should initiate a self-searching, particularly if the two who are clashing can make no headway in integrating their differences. Repentance of sin as worship consists of this deliberate searching of the self and this putting of the self without reservation under the control of creative love.

Beyond all this, repentance involves all those sins which we cannot specify because they are beyond the reach of our utmost self-searching. These unfindable sins, too, must be submitted to the transformative working of God. One can offer himself as a sinner to be remade by the working of creative interaction as it operates in each concrete situation.

Repentance of sin is a mature undertaking. It must not be encouraged during childhood, else the child thinks of God as watching him all the time with distrustful eye, or the child fears God. This is morbid. But the child needs training toward the time when he can practice this form of worship. The chief way in which this can be done is through *co-operative evaluation*, participated in by the child and his parents, (a) where the parents have religious values in mind and (b) when they themselves practice repentance. The parents do not mention *sin* or *God* or any other theological term to a child not yet mature enough to be religious. This cannot be done until the children have an appreciation of what God is and of what loyalty to God means.

In this process of co-operative evaluation, the parents guide the child away from cheap excuses, alibis, self-righteousness, putting all the blame on others, acting resentful or injured, and all other ways that indicate an overstrong desire to protect the self *as it is*. Again, the child should not be encouraged to say, "I'm sorry," when he does not mean it. When he is small, he does not need to say anything. He can act with more meaning. Also, the child needs to be encouraged to see (a) his part in whatever went wrong as clearly as he sees the part of another and (b) the other's part in whatever went well as clearly as he sees his own.

All this must be done not for the sake of being "daddy's sweet girl" or of bettering the child's advantage with the other children, but for the sake of the values to which the children gain access through their *growing relationships*. As early and as often as is possible, little children should get tastes of the values that come through the right kind of interaction between persons. If this happens, they will honestly *feel* sorry

when relationships are injured, and they will not only want to say so, but want to do something about it. The main thing is for them to get the *feel* of creative interaction and be ready to *see their own part* in hindering or destroying it. If the child gets this *feel*, he will care. If he cares, he will be sorry. If he is sorry, he will feel again the pain of what he did that he shouldn't have done, or what he didn't do that he should have done. This feeling-the-pain-again-and-wanting-to-do-something-about-it is repentance at the child level. When the child becomes adult, repentance must include the deliberate practice of the three forms of repentance described above.

#### PETITION AS WORSHIP

Prayer in the broad sense includes all of worship. As such, it is the subject of this whole chapter. In the narrower sense, however, prayer is petition. The same test must be applied to petition as is applied to all other practices: Does it bring us more completely under the control of God? If by asking God for things worshipfully we come more completely under the control of God, we shall be able to achieve many things not otherwise possible to us. Living more completely under the control of God will render these things more accessible.

That is to say, when we have first submitted all our wants and values to God, we ourselves are more or less transformed. This means that our values and valuings are transformed. Consequently, the ensuing creative interaction between ourselves and others is so released and augmented that it can transform the situation in such a way as to bring about more effectively the goods we seek.

Petition is an adult practice. But the child needs preparation for it. The chief way in which the parents can prepare the

child for prayer is by dealing in such a way with his petitions addressed to them that he is drawn into creative interaction with them. If a parent arbitrarily answers "Yes" or "No" to the child's requests, the child will get no training. But if the parent tries to make every reaction of his own to each important petition of the child an interaction of valuing, the child will be trained for prayer. Again, (a) the values of which the parent makes the child aware and (b) the parent's attitude toward all the values involved in the child's requests have an enormous influence on what needs the child, when grown mature, will think worthy of bringing to God in prayer. The pattern of religious petition is set deeply for the child by the parent's responses to the child's petitions addressed to father and mother.

It must have become clear by now that prayer is too precious a practice to be used as a plaything or a convention in childhood. But how does the child approaching religious maturity begin praying to God? When he has a sufficiently adequate understanding of God and of what commitment to God means to make praying a significant practice, he is included at times in the situation where one or both of his parents are praying. The first sharing of prayer will occur when the young person has come to the parent with a petition which the parent feels unprepared to deal with adequately. Then, *if the young person is mature enough*, the parent will tell him that he himself needs to make it a matter of petition to God and will invite the young person to be with him.

At first no invitation is given the child to participate actively. Prayer is a mature practice. The child must be given time to feel his way into it. His first prayers will probably be non-verbal, just a loyal thinking to himself about it all. Gradually,



by himself, he will work out his own way of praying. He should not be asked to pray in the group until it is certain that he is entirely ready to do so. But more and more, as occasions arise which make it a significant thing to do, he will be included in the practice of individual praying with his parents.

#### RITUAL AS WORSHIP

Ritual is patterned recognition of commitment to God. Each individual and group must develop those several patterns which best express commitment in the more public or more routinized activities of family life. *Down underneath the use of all rituals must be an actual, deep commitment, renewed frequently through other practices in worship.* The real efficacy of ritual rests on this. Its effectiveness can be judged only by the consequences of practicing it over a long period of time. But, providing this true foundation is there, the depth of meaning entering into a ritual at any one time is not conclusive evidence of its total worth.

The degree of awareness of the deep foundational commitment which a specific ritual arouses is bound to vacillate from time to time owing to many factors. For one thing, the time for the ritual is usually set, and the one officiating is not a faucet whose deeper feelings can be turned on and off. Also, the nature of the total family situation bears on the immediate effectiveness of the ritual. Again, worship in the form of ritual is particularly likely to become a hollow convention or even a hypocritical activity. But, in the long run, there is significance in this regulated recognition of commitment.

The two most common forms in family life are probably grace at table and family prayers. But religious ritual in the



family need not be limited to these. There are many other possibilities, as will become clear through a study of the suggestions already given regarding procedures<sup>4-12</sup> in family living while bearing this in mind. The purpose of a family ritual is not instruction about God, nor understanding of prayer, nor expression of the actual state of the heart or mind of the participant at the moment. It is, as we have said, "a patterned recognition of commitment to God."

Perhaps the function of ritual will become more clear by use of an analogy. Men tip their hats to women. Down underneath all the hat-tipping of all the men there is (at least theoretically!) a deep respect in men for women and hence some commitment to the furtherance of their welfare. Yet if we had some way of measuring the degree of awareness of this foundational commitment to women which was aroused by each hat-raising of all the men in one city block in one hour's time, what a variety there would be! The findings would indicate hypocrites, flatterers, exploiters, and gay deceivers, on the one hand, and all degrees of genuine respect, admiration, affection, and automatic routine habit, on the other hand. However, in the long run, the tipping of hats has a social efficacy in sustaining the respect of men for women. This modicum of ritualistic efficacy in the performance has kept the custom from vanishing.

Shall small children be present during the family rituals? Only a general answer may be given, for much depends on the nature of the individual family and the religious maturity of the parents. But as a rule, a child who is mature enough to eat at the family table is mature enough to be with the family during the ritual of asking grace. As we have intimated, it is a patterned recognition; besides that, it is brief. More pointed

still, it comes before eating and the attention of the child is almost entirely on the matter of finding out what food is coming. In time, of course, he will ask questions which will have to be answered.

In regard to family prayers, the situation is somewhat different for reasons mentioned during the discussion of petition as worship. On the whole, it is better that the child remain absent from family prayers until he has a fair understanding of what God is and how He works in this world of ours. This does not mean that his training is neglected. Each family should develop a number of nonreligious rituals in which the children can participate with adequate understanding. These express the appreciative concern of members of the family for each other and the group. Examples of patterned recognition of such concern might be the setting aside of fifteen minutes once a week when every member would do something for the betterment of the family life, something he had himself discerned needed doing; or keeping fresh flowers on the table; or welcoming father home. There is no end to the possible list.

#### THE CREATIVE FAMILY

The family that lives for the sake of great things itself becomes great. When it lives for the sake of what is Greatest, the Greatest there is becomes accessible. Committing itself to Creative Love renders it dauntless, rich and free. It cannot then be made callous, self-centered, pleasure-mad, or proud, should good fortune suddenly come to it. It cannot then be laid low by despair should evil fortune wipe out all that it has. Creative Love has brought to the family whatever it has had, and can bring it as much again, and more. The Creativity of life remains. Pain and pleasure, happiness and unhappi-

ness, satisfaction and yearning, radiant joy and devastating suffering will be its portion in any case, for the family is composed primarily of interpersonal relationships and so its activities involve the deepest issues in the lives of every member. But the quality and meaning of its life will be the richest where creative interaction is most full, most free, and most honest. It is through such interaction that Creativity speaks to the family most clearly. Complete commitment to the Creativity of God is the great source of security, of freedom, of richness, and of meaning for the family.

But such commitment cannot be made through one great and final act. Commitment is progressive. We grow more through committing ourselves more. Through greater growth there is more to commit. Worship is not an act performed apart from everyday living, but is rather the creative way of living. Living this way, the family can love into being, can worship into being, the potentialities of each member and of its own community. The worshiping family is creative.

The spotlight of our attention has been narrowly focused upon a view of a cross section of the life of the family as it busies itself with the many matters which are its particular concern. In spite of this, all the way through we have been made aware of the way the family is inextricably interwoven with the larger community. Therefore, when living its religion in this creative way we have been describing, the family is creative not only of the personalities of its members but of a new society as well. Since the family is the group where God's Creativity can attain its greatest fulfillment, it is also the group which can produce the greatest social transformation.

Such transformation is achieved not only through the inter-

action of valuings between each actual family and its community but also through the kind of persons the family develops and sends into the membership of the larger society. As these enter into their work, build their homes, and participate in communal life, their valuings definitely affect the quality and achievement of society. Furthermore, their valuings are fairly well developed. Whether assets or liabilities, they represent years of cultivation and so are not immediately subject to social coercions. More important still, the attitudes of family-graduates toward change and the re-creation of society are well established. This is of inestimable importance in a society such as ours, which is not only democratic but also swiftly changing. The citizens produced by a family which lives worshipfully and creatively are the most valuable assets of any society. Such a family undergirds all other social institutions.

Notwithstanding all this, a family can live its religion fully and richly only if this creative way of living is found in the school, in business and industry, in politics and statesmanship, and in the church. The problem of creative religious living needs this double attack. It must be promoted from the inside by way of the creative community within the family. It must be promoted from the outside by way of the creative purpose of those institutions and customs which shape the conduct of the family and of the individual. Unless the large acquisitive social structures themselves are more and more controlled by creative interaction, they will continue to crush and maim the creative life within the family. Business, industry, the state, the school, the church, must all be centers and forms of creative interaction if we are to have wholesome families and richly endowed personalities.

Certainly one of the things giving these major institutions their power over human life is the pathetically stupid reverence many families have for wealth as wealth and their fawning recognition of those who produce it. Being successful in business in the sense of gaining a lucrative control over the means of production and the avenues of communication and of education would not be considered such a great achievement if the mass of the people had a sounder sense of values. Ability in business would then receive the same recognition as ability in any comparable achievement. Guiding children in their development of reasonably sound and adequate criteria of evaluation is a prime function of the family. Consequently, the family has its fate in its own hands to this extent. But even full use of this means of social control is not sufficient. The powerfully organized social institutions must be transformed so that they promote creative human relationships and do not merely accumulate the means of wealth and power.

In the family more quickly than anywhere else, life becomes intolerable when creative interaction sinks low. In the wider and less intimate forms of social living we can struggle along somehow with relatively little of it, however many depressions and much impoverishment descend upon us by reason of its lack. But the ever-tightening bonds of interdependence between the family and all these other social structures are making continued existence everywhere intolerable without a greater amount of creative interaction between our several valuings. This drawing together of individuals and groups into closer interdependence is the work of God's love to the end of generating creative interaction. If we respond to the demands of these bonds, then creative interaction arises. This means that if we respond creatively one to another we experi-

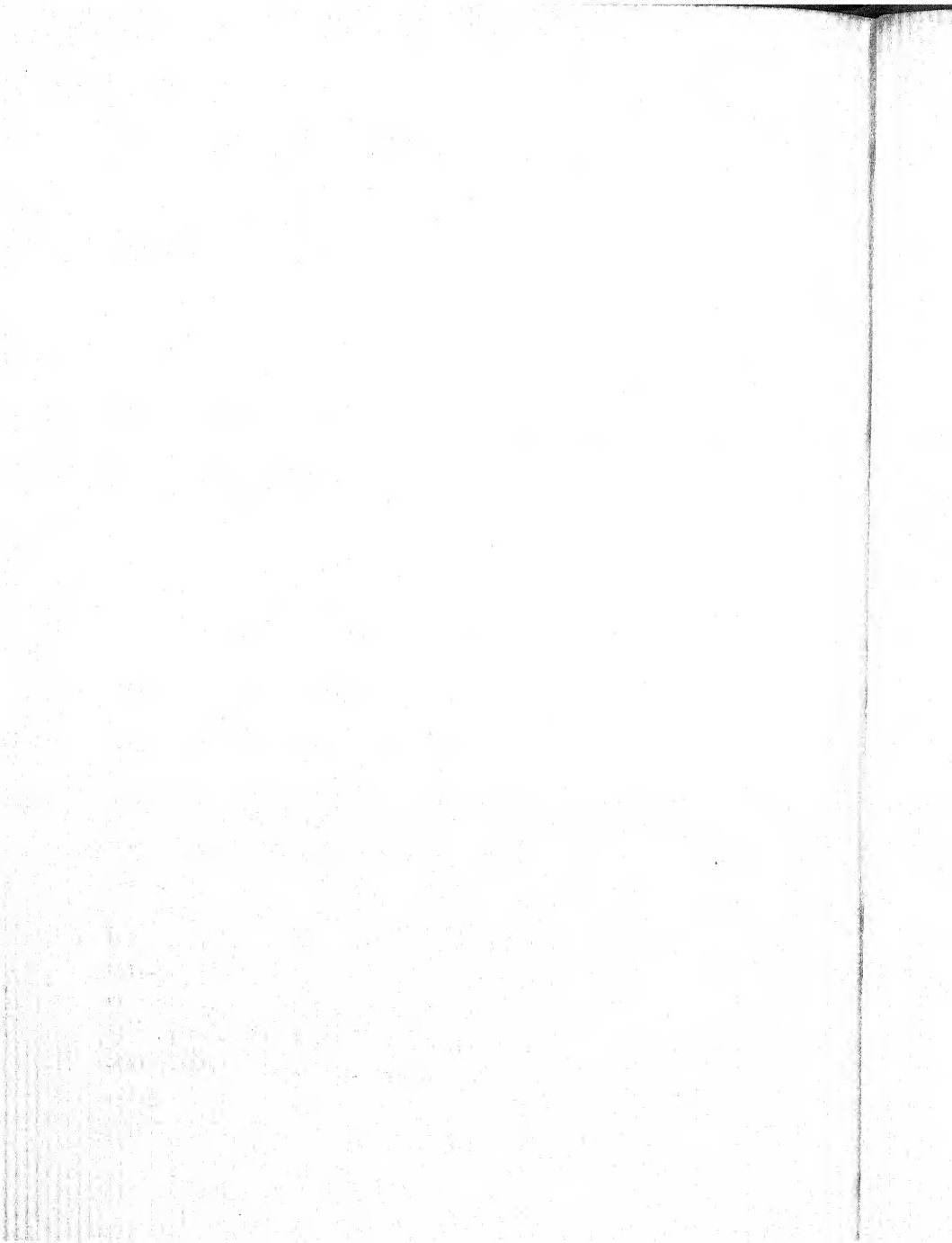
ence those qualities and meanings in life which are specific fulfillments of God's love.

Today we as a nation are extremely distressed. We are paying a shattering price for our continued deafness to increasingly insistent demands for a larger measure of interaction-of-valuings amongst all participants in all areas of living throughout the whole world. To the anxieties, conflicts, destitution, corruption, and carnage which in the past have considerably disrupted family living, greater terrors have now been added. Long-established towns are being swept out of existence almost overnight to make way for enormous industrial centers where utmost care goes into the mechanical structures but psychological and spiritual conditions are flagrantly neglected. All too many of the ingenious new inventions kill human beings, some en masse, rather than bringing life more abundant. Social exploitation, rottenness, and crime have increased until some spots in our country are recognized as being under gang control. Science has been called upon to devise such tortures for human beings as destroy their innermost selves. The list ever lengthens. And the most disheartening aspect of the whole ordeal is the sense of insecurity and helplessness of the average family.

Nevertheless, we, as a nation, have more reason than ever for assurance. Quietly, yet with increasing vigor and surety, community after community across our beloved land is being shocked into discovering what has been happening during this last century—most families neglecting to do their part in nurturing the hard-won, priceless matrix of our democracy—the community, because so engrossed in their own individual pursuits. Realization is growing that democracy is not individual freedom to get as far ahead as possible. The genius of democ-

racy is that creative process whereby great things come to pass wherever *every* family contributes its valuings and findings to concerted effort to develop an ever sounder, finer community and benefits through the nurture and resources its community provides. Democracy is successful to the extent that every family seeks continuously to become better prepared to participate in the creative interaction which creates the community, and does participate courageously and effectively. Today, families and neighborhoods *are* becoming ardently active in fostering that creative intercommunication out of which comes first a working consensus regarding the improving of community living, and second, concerted action. No national change could hold more promise for the family, particularly the family that would live its religion. It is not our place to ask if this great new day is dawning too slowly and too late. Studied, all-out participation is our only effective answer.

Never before in history has man been called so realistically and so imperatively to make the choice between the way of destructive wrath and the way of creative love. In such matters as those of state, diplomacy, and large industry, not many of us as individuals can make this choice in a way that is world-shaping. But each in his own family and neighborhood can do so. Creativity never ceases while life endures. The family and community which continue to quicken the creative processes continue to be convinced of this great truth. As men die and are born, as cultures crumble and emerge, as social systems crack and grow, this tremendous force persists, working tremendous creations where mankind joins forces with it. The family that lives its religion knows this to be Creative Love.





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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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Periodicals [those starred of special interest to parents]:

*Children*. Monthly. U. S. Children's Bureau, Dept. of Labor, Washington, D.C.

*Child Development*. Monthly. Society for Research in Child Development, Northwestern Univ., Evanston, Ill.

\**Child-Family Digest*. Monthly. 5320 Danneel St., New Orleans 15, La.

*Childhood Education*. Monthly, Sept. through May. Association for Childhood Education International, 1200 Fifteenth St., N.W., Washington, D. C.

\**Child Study*. Quarterly. Child Study Association of America, 132 E. 74th St., New York 21, N. Y.

\**Christian Home, The*. Monthly. Methodist Publishing House, 810 Broadway, Nashville, Tenn.

*Family Life*. Monthly Service Bulletin. American Institute of Family Relations, 5287 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles 27, Calif.

*Marriage and Family Living*. Quarterly. National Council on Family Relations, 5757 S. Drexel Ave., Chicago 37, Ill.

\**National Parent-Teacher*. Monthly. Sept. through June. 600 S. Michigan Blvd., Chicago, Ill. Also the state P.T.A. magazine in some states.

\**Parents' Magazine*. 52 Vanderbilt Ave., New York 17, N. Y.

\**Two to Six*. 420 Madison Ave., New York 17, N. Y.

See also reliably edited departments on child, family, or community development in various "home" and "women's" magazines, and local newspapers.

Guidance through pamphlets, reading lists, or study guides, and in some cases through class groups, courses, or special leadership. Listings of materials or services on request.

- Agricultural Extension Services* for both youth and adult, College (or Dept.) of Agriculture, State University.
- American Association of University Women*, 1634 I St., N.W., Washington 6, D. C.
- American Institute of Family Relations*, 5278 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles 27, Calif.
- Association for Family Living*, 28 E. Jackson Blvd., Suite 1313, Chicago 4, Ill.
- Child Study Association of America*, 132 E. 74th St., New York 21, N. Y.
- Family Service Association of America*, 192 Lexington Ave., New York 16, N. Y.
- General Federation of Women's Clubs*, 1734 N St., N.W., Washington 6, D. C.
- Headquarters of the various religious faiths and denominations*
- National Congress of Parents and Teachers*, 1201 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington 6. D. C.
- National Council of Churches of Christ in America*, 297 Fourth Ave., New York 10, N. Y.
- National Education Association*, 1201 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington 6, D. C.
- Science Research Associates, Inc.*, 57 W. Grand Ave., Chicago 10, Ill. Note especially the two series of booklets: *Life Adjustment*, and *Better Living*.
- United States Government*, Departments such as *The Children's Bureau*, *Education*, *Health*, and *Welfare*, and *The Interior*, Washington 25, D. C.



## INDEX

- Appreciative Consciousness, growth of, 14-17, 19, 30, 32-33, 57-58, 59-60, 62-64, Chap. IV, 85-86, 90-92, 94-95, 99, Chap. VI, 120-125, 137-138, 142-145, 160-161, 168-170, 173-174, 176-177, 181-182, 191-193, 204-209; love form of, 14-17, 19, 20; shock to, 167-171, 181-182, Chap. XI, 219-220
- Attitudes, 8-9, 54, 74-75, 186-187, *see* Habits; Valuing; reorientation of, 74-75, 90-91, 110, 151-152, 158-159, 191-192, *see* Co-operative Evaluation; Worship
- Baby, 91, 99-100, 103, 113, 140, 181, 185, 188, 194, 215-216
- Bible, 13, 45, 48, 51, 171
- Bondages, 7, 11-12, 13, 18, 24, 40, 41-42, 51, 62, 101-102, 109, 110-111, 112-113, 138, 160-161, Chap. XI, 189-191, 193-196
- Budgeting, 26, Chap. VII, 147; principles of family, 120-127
- Business, 6, 96, 116-117, 127, 128-129, 186, 218-220
- Celebration, 64, 65, 66, 90, 160-161, 200-209
- Certainty, bases for, 14-15, 20, 43, 46, Chap. III; quest for, 45-58, Chap. XI
- Change, 14, 87-88, 125, 130, 167-171, 181-182, 183-184, 185-187, 194-198, 217-221, *see* Crisis; Growth
- Child, beginnings of growth of, 99-101, 145-146, 181-182, 209; beginnings of religion in, 113-115, 209, 211-212, 212-214, 215-216; spoiled, *see* Infantilism; suffering of, 142-143, 196-198, 211-214; uniqueness of, 87-89, 112, 139
- Choices, 43, 56-57, 99-102, 119-120, 176-177, 220-221, Chaps. I, VII, X
- Christmas, 28, 206-207, 209
- Church, 4, 49, 95, 96, 109, 129-131, 163-164, 218
- Citizen, 113, 218
- Codes, 12-24, 55-66, 88, 135, 137, 175-178, Chap. VIII
- Coercions, toward growth, 8, 17, 18, 27, 79, 118-121, 138, 158-159, 168, 170-171, 191-193, 193-195; toward retardation, 6-8, 13, 159-160, 164-165, 179, 187-191, 194-195, 211
- Commitment, 11-13, 24, 37-39, 46, 54-67, 75, 178-179, 173-175, 177-180, Chap. XI, 189, 195, 197-198, 200-201, 209-210, 214-216, 216-221
- Community, The, 50, 96-97, 126-131, 138, 141-142, 145-146, 148, 189-193, 197, 217-221; definition of, 5, 16, 129, 131, 141-146; growth of, 16; nature of, 145-146; sense of, 156-158, 191-193, 197-198; of valuing, *see* Valuing
- Community of Valuing, 32, 33, 46-49, 63, 65, 66, 90, 126, 131, 133-

- 136, 145-146, 156, 174-177; modification of, 134-136, 172-182
- Competition, 4-7, 52, 74-75, 90, 151-152, 218-220
- Conflict and Adjustment, 14-15, 34, 55-56, 58-60, 62-63, Chap. IV, 86, 90-96, 109, 111-115, 126, 151-152, 156-157, Chap. X, 200-201, 209-210
- Co-operative Evaluation, 28-35, 59-60, 64-66, 92, 122, 123, 141-145, 152-153, 162-163, 174-175, 211-212
- Council, 90, 107
- Creative Interaction, effects of, 14-15, 34-35, 89, 94-95, 111-112, 114, 129, 138, 149-161, 165-166, 217-221; love form of, 112-113, 179-181, 207-209, 220; nature of, 7, 14-22, 16, 26, 32-34, 43-44, 188; obstructions to, 21, 23, 26-27, 39-42, 51, 56, 57-59, 80-81, 86, 109, 112-113, 139, 149-150, 169, 206-207, 218-219; power of, 50, 191-193, *see* God; promotion of, 81-82, 105-113, 121-125, Chap. IX; requirements of, 34, 54, 60, 62-66, 80-82, 88-89, 212; at work, 4, 31-33, 46, 48-49, 53-67, 71, 76-77, 90-93, 126-129, 134-136, 165, 174-178, 191-193, 195-196, 216-221
- Creativity, of God, 14-15, 20, 24, 34-35, 37, 39, 148, 155, 191-193, 216-221; signals of, 24, 59, 139, 140, 168-172, 181-182, 187-188, 191-192, 220
- Crisis, 6, 25-27, 46, 65-66, 74, 100-101, 111, 163-164, 167-168, 181, Chap. XI, 186, 219-221
- Criteria of, creative interaction, 34, 94-95; commitment, 198; freedom, 138; game, 164; good life, 22-24, 51; "good" resources, 131; guiding ideas, 47-48; ideals, 11; meaningful living, 217; moral goodness, 23; prayer, 212; religion, 13; religious celebration, 206-207; religious goodness, 23; religious growth, 21-22, 24, 113, 200-201; religious living, 24; religious maturity, 12, 200; social activity, 5; success in discussion, 59-60; worship, 202; worth of objects and resources, 11, 131
- Crucified Life, 51, 57, 193-196, 199
- Culture, 93, 96-97, 126-127, 218-221
- Democracy, 52, 90, 96-97, 102, 107, 111, 133, 137-138, 216-221
- Discipline, 36-37, 38-39, 41, 55-67, Chap. VIII, 152-153, 158-159; self-136-138, 145-146, 156-159, 209-212
- Discussion, 58-60, 63, 107, 111, 122, 126, 129, 131, 133, 162, 172-181
- Emotion, 9-10, Chap. VI, 99-101, 102, 105, 110, 174-175, *see* Motivation; Value, experiencing of
- Energy, needed surplus, 56, 61, 65, 66, 81, 83, 84-85, 116, 125-126, 154-155, 159-160, 166, 186, 192-193, 198-199
- Excommunication, 57-58, 85-86, 112-113, 139, 189-190, 191-193, 206, 218-221
- Experimentation, 48, 65-66, 105-106, 107-108, 109-110, 151-152, 176-179, 191-193
- Family, Chap. V; creation of, 18, 27, 42-43, 216-221; growth of, 96-99, 216-221; life-line of, 112-113, 221; nature of, 27, 34, 43-44, 49, *see* Parents; Relationships
- Father, 37-39, 39-41, 85-86, 155
- Fear, 31, 65-66, 109-111, 112, 182, 220, Chap. XI, 216-221

- Fellowship, 49, 50, 52, 58, 131, 145, 205-206, *see* Community; Love
- Financial Aspects, 5, 6-7, 28-29, 40-42, 112, Chap. VII, 128-129, 130-131, 163-164, 218-219
- Freedom, 11, 34, 94, Chap. VIII, 145-146, 148, 158-159, 172, 177, 199, 212, 216-27, 220-221
- Gift, 8, 13, 40, 207-208
- God, viii, 11, 43, 44, 72, 199; access to, 11-17, 48-49, 111-115, 165-166, 197-199, 212-215; grace of, 50-51, 171, 199, 203; presence of, 24, 34-35, 57-58, 71-73; understanding of, Chap. III, 167-171, *see* Nurture and Guidance, religious; will of, 13, 14-17, Chap. III, 47-48, 49-51, *see* Creativity
- Goodness, 22-23, 24, 136-137, 147; criterion of, 131, *see* Loyalty, progression of; Value
- Group, of disciples, 50; growth of, 149-158, 216-221; patterns, 6-7, 64-65, 151-152, 159-160, 164-165, 207-208; pressures, 4-7, 49-50, 63-64, 96-97, 109; process, 114-115, 176-178, *see* Creative Interaction; Community
- Growth, conditions of, 114, 172-173; of loyalty, *see* Loyalty; of love, 43-44, 75, *see* Love; nature of, 37, 88-89; of personality, 12, 14-16, 30, 34-35, 46, 56-57, 63-64, 88-89, 93-94, Chap. VI, Chap. VIII, 156-157, 165-166, 172-181, 200; religious, 113-114, *see* Nurture and Guidance, religious; requirements of, 35, 42, 62-63, 80-82, 93-94, 149-150; signs of, 94-95; of value, 173, *see* Ruling Concern
- Guidance, *see* Creative Interaction; Creativity, signs of; Discipline; Nurture; Parents
- Habits, 27, 34-35, 56-57, 59-60, 101-102, 106-107, 114-115, 147, 151-152, 153-154, 159-160, 170-171, 176-177, Chap. XI, 194-195, 203, *see* Coercions, toward retardation
- Ideals, of adults, 62-63, 87-89; compulsive, 8-11; dangers in, 8-10, 152, 155; origin of, 9; treatment of, 9-11
- Individualism, 18-19, 27, 40-41, 59, 60-61, 75-80, 158, 194-195, 204-206, 206-207
- Infantilism, 39-42, 77, 86, 110, 122, 158, 194-195
- Inferiority, sense of, 56-58, 64, 109-110, 153
- Inner Conflict, 56-57, 168-171, 200-202, 209-212, *see* Loyalty; Ruling Concern
- Insight, 17, 35, Chap. III, 46-47, 76, 139, 152, 170, 172, 174-177, 184, 191-193, 210, *see* Creativity, signals of
- Integration, 156-158, 201, *see* God, will of; Ruling Concern
- Interdependence, vii, 27, 71, 96-97, 128, 189-191, 216-221
- Interests, 82, 92, 98-99, 118-119, 149-151, 155-157, 179-181
- Investment of resources, 41-42, 83-84, 116-117, Chap. VII, 126-127, *see* Loyalty
- Jesus Christ, 10, 13, 49-52, 57, 58, 131, 171, 192, 193-196, 199, 208-209
- Kierkegaard, S. A., 201
- Law, *see* Codes
- Lincoln, Abraham, 183
- Love, basis of, 43-44; expression of, 8, 21, 63-64, 82, 184; growth of,



- 44, Chap. IV, 80-82, 194-196; nature of, 17-20, 23-24, 43-44, 181, 183-187; object of, 195; power of, 23, 112-113, 179-181, 183-185
- Loyalty, development of, 137-138; dominant, 75, 89, 126-127, 130-131, 195-196, 200-202; in human relations, 82, 183-187, 194-196; nature of, 183-187; progression of, 95, 99-101, 103, 112, 113-114, 197, 200, 217-218; religious, 11-13, 37-39, 42-43, 51-53, 65-67, 113-115, 131, 200-212, *see* Ruling Concern
- Marriage, 23-24, 37, Chap. IV, 157, 189-191; problems of, 23-24, 74-75, 78, 80
- Meaning, *see* Appreciative Consciousness; Value
- Money, *see* Financial Aspects
- Mother, 41, 85-86, 185, 186, 188-189, 194-196
- Motivation, Chap. I, 9, 18, 27, 43, 72, 86, Chap. VI, 99, 102, 118-120, 136-138, 139, 143, 152-153, 156, 158, 173-174, Chap. XI, 195, 204-205, 211-212
- Nurture and Guidance, methods of, 34, 36, 37, 38-39, 42-43, 88-89, Chap. VI, 111, 120, Chap. VIII, 136-138; religious, 112-115, 209, 211
- Obedience, Chap. VIII, *see* Commitment; Discipline; Parents, control by; Value
- Objectives, of living, Chap. I, 47-48; supreme, 24, 99-102, 200-202, *see* Ideals; Ruling Concern
- Objectivity, 76, 173-176, 178-181, 191-192
- Order, 64-65, 95, 106-107, 172-173, 177-178, 179-181; break in, 159-160, 175-178, *see* Crisis; Change
- Organized Minorities, *see* Group, pressures
- Parents, Chap. V; as authorities, 8-11, 120-121, 133-136; control by, 8-11, 33, 35, 38-39, 42-43, 62-66, 105-113, 114, 130, Chap. VIII, 145-146, 158-159, 165, 197-198, 212-214; function of, viii, 87-89, 93, 102-103, 120-121, 123, 134-135, 195, 197-198, 212-214; mistakes of, 4-10, 39, 40, 41-42, 83-84, 88-89, 105-106, 121-122, 140, 146, 164-165, 167, 180, 182; preparation of, 95-97, 164-166, 173-174
- Patterns, of group interaction, 151-152, 164-165, 207-209; social, 74-75, *see* Group
- Personality, *see* Growth
- Power, 49-50, 112-113, 121-122, 179-181, Chap. XI, 183-185
- Prayer, 45, 54-67, 173-174, 202-204, 212-214, 215-216
- Problems, Chap. X; definition, 168, 170; family, 178; kinds of, 170-171, 178; of misbehavior, 139-145, 159
- Programs, 64-65, 90, 106-112, 122, 177-178
- Punishment, 142-145, *see* Creativity, signals of
- Purity of Heart, 11-13, 173-175, 176-177, 201-203, 207, 209, 212, *see* Loyalty, supreme; Ruling Concern
- Questions, of child, 106, 141, 213, 216; as guides to child, 30, 32, 141; of parents, vii; as symptoms of readiness, 106
- Recreation, 17-18, 26-27, 90-91, Chap. IX; forms of, 158-159, 161-165

- Relationships, 14, 58-59, 155, 156-157, 206; damaging, 18-19, 21, 74, 139, 219-220; of family to community, 4-7, 95-97, 162, 217-221; husband-wife, 23-24, 37, Chap. IV, 84-85, 157, 189-191, 197; parent-child, 35-37, 41, 145, 153-154, 155-156, 189, 193, 197, 211-212; person-to-person, 55-56, 58, 62, 91-92, 195, 205-206
- Religion, contribution of, 11, 24, 178-181; nature of, Chap. I, II, 24, 44
- Religious Living, nature of, viii, 11-24, 38, 42-44, 51-53, 88-89, 126-131, 137, 147-149, 209
- Ritual, 55-56, 58, 60, 66, 205, 214-216; purpose of, 215
- Royce, Josiah, 73
- Rufer, Naomi, ix
- Rugh, Charles E., 141
- Ruling Concern, 4-13, 99-102, 117-118, 147-148, 179-181, 189, 195-196
- Sacrifice, 42-43, 56-57, 118, 137, 177
- Santayana, George, 160
- Satisfaction, 60, 75, Chap. VII, 147-148, 160; false, 56-57, 72, 184, 187-196; primary, 52, 195; significant, 60, 72, 195, *see* Individualism; Motivation
- School, 83-84, 96, 111, 218
- Security, creative, 35-37, 77, Chap. XI, 216-221
- Selfishness, 36, 39-42, 56-57, 60-61, 136, 218, *see* Individualism; Infantilism
- Sensitivity, 15, 18, 43-44, 78-80, 118-119, 138, 191-193
- Sex, 23-24, 78-80, 129, 157
- Sharing, 26-27, 63-66, 90-93, *see* Creative Interaction; Community of Valuings
- Signal Reaction, 9-10, 110, 182
- Sin, 209-212
- Standards, *see* Codes; Ideals; Programs
- State, The, 96, 218
- Success, 59-60, 75, *see* Criteria; Satisfaction
- Suffering, 56-57, 77, 139-145, 176-178, 179-180, Chap. XI, 184, 189-191, 195-196, 211-212
- Sunday, 107
- Symbols, 156, 162-163, 202-206
- Techniques and Procedures, building husband-wife relationship, 63-67, 80-82, 84-85; co-operative evaluation, 29-31, 35, 58-60, 92, 105-106, 120-123, 132-136, 141-142, 174-177; dealing with associates, 55-56, 58-62, 63-65, 78-79, 80-82, 88, 90-91, 119, 122-123, 153, 156-158, 174-175; dealing with impulsiveness, 9-11, 58-59, 110, 174-175; dealing with misbehavior, 62-64, 140-144, 152-153, 158-160; dealing with suffering, in adult, 56-58, 160-161, 191-193, in child, 86, 197; dealing with wants, 90, 120-125; developing appreciation of value, 55-67, 105-111, 204-206; developing objectivity, 11-12, 58-62, 173-175, 179-180, 193-195; experimental living, 65-66, 90-91, 107-110, 149-153, 193-195; finding the way of God, 53-67; guiding children's behavior, 62-67, 90-92, 105-111, 123-124, 153-156, 171-172, 172-173, 176-178; increasing morale, 11-12, 57-58, 159-161, 192-194; marital adjustment, 75-76, 78; preparing for growth experience, group, 12, 59-60, 64-67, 173-175, 179-180, 206-209, 217-218, individual, 11-12, 53-54, 55-66 (under heading,

- Orientation), 108-109, 159-160, 201-204, 210, 214-215; problem solving, 58-60, 172-178; promoting creative interaction, 29-30, 32, 34, 58-59, 62-67, 80-82, 90-92, 105-111, 121-122, 151-156; promoting family growth, 62-67, 90-94; testing insights, 46-48, 56-57, 66, 111, 176-178; training child in religious living and worship, 42-43, 114-116, 160, 173-174, 204-206, 206-209, 211-214, 215-216
- Tools for Living, 11, 53, 125, 127, 182
- Trust, 34, 37-39, 84, 85, 172
- Truth, 20, 38, 46-47, 94, 138, 169, 171-172, 174-176
- Unity, 50, 57, 95, 156-158
- Value, access to, 102-108, 118, 137, 184-187; appreciation of, Chap. VI, *see* Appreciative Consciousness; as authority, 31, 43, 99, 101, 121, 132-133, 145-146, 174; conflict of, 56-57, 92, 109; cost of, 185-187; definition of, 188; devotion to, 118-120, 130-131; experiencing of, 98-99, 105-108, 110, 121, 175-177, 181-182, 200, 211-212; growth of, 173, 191-193, 205-206; levels of, 101, 136; nature of, 188; specific, 100, 147-148, 176-177, 187-188, 200-201; system of, 108-109, 113-115
- Value-carrier, conditions of, 189, 194-195, 196, 197; nature of, 188-189, 194-196, 202-204
- Valuings, communal, 134-136; conflict of, 86, 90; definition of, 15-16, 27; interaction of, 15-22, 27-44, 34, 43, 58-63, 105-113, 145-146, 170, 195; quality of, 31, 33, 35, 43, 66, 94-95, 114, 147-148, 177, 217-218
- Wants, 56-57, 75-80, 86, 118-120
- Whitehead, A. N., 201
- Worship, 73-75, 82, 95, 127, 137, 145-146; in daily practice, 54-67, 173-174, 175, Chap. XII; definition of, 201-202; forms of, 174, 201-202, 206, 209, 212, 214-215; purpose of, 201
- Yerkes, R. M., 194
- Youth, 6, 30-31, 104, 121, 129